

Talking to Your Kids About Recent Deaths by Suicide

- Be aware of your own feelings and fears; do your best to be calm and non-confrontational when discussing this topic.
- Don't be afraid to discuss these deaths with your child; it will not make him/her suicidal.
- Don't assume that because your child didn't know the student personally that they are not impacted by these deaths.
- If they ask "why" these students chose to end their life, explain that the reasons are never simple and that no one is to blame.
- You may want to use Logic's new song "1-800-273-8255" or the series *13 Reasons Why* to begin the conversation.
- Sometimes in retrospect, children realize they may have missed signs that the student was struggling. Remind them that no one is to blame and that no one incident or issue caused these deaths.
- Don't go into details about how these students died (method of death).
- Do ask your child how they are feeling about these losses. Let them know it is ok to have uncomfortable feelings like anger.
- Do ask your child how they cope when they are feeling overwhelmed.
- Discuss problem solving and healthy coping ideas.
- Do ask your child who they would turn to if they needed help (and be okay if it is not you, as long as it is another adult – not a friend).
- Leave the door open for your child to discuss this issue, as well as their feelings, with you in the future.
- Be aware that teens can regress or act out when stressed or overwhelmed.
- Don't be afraid to reach out for support in supporting your child.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES:

HOTLINE	301.738.CALL (2255)	24/7
TEXTLINE	301.738.2255	*Limited hours
CRISISCHAT.ORG	ONLINE	24/7
MONTGOMERY COUNTY CRISIS CENTER	301.777.4000	24/7
MONTGOMERY COUNTY SCREENINGS/ ASSESSMENTS FOR CHILDREN/ADOLESCENTS	240.444.1430	
NATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION LIFELINE	1.800.273.TALK (8255)	24/7

Is Your Child at Risk for Suicide?

Anyone can be at risk of suicide when they feel hopeless and overwhelmed. Here are some warning signs to look out for:

- Hopelessness
- Statements of suicidality, preoccupation with death
- Writing, music, or art focused on death
- Giving away prized possessions
- Withdrawing from family and friends/ isolation
- Acting out / aggression
- Neglecting personal appearance
- Running away from home
- Increased drive for “perfection”
- Risk taking behavior
- Failing grades or not making grades that are “expected”
- Being bullied / bullying
- Problems on social media
- Substance use / abuse
- Peer pressure
- Loneliness

If you suspect your child is thinking about suicide what should you do?

- Take all threats of suicide seriously and reach out for help immediately
- Hotlines/Crisis Center are a good place to start to help assess level of severity and resources
- Express empathy (even if you can't relate to the issue or you think they are being dramatic)
- Discuss healthy coping and problem-solving skills
- Stay connected with your child
- Connect your child with a professional who can help
- Remove any firearms from your home until the crisis has passed

For information or resources, contact hotline@every-mind.org, 24 hours a day/7 days a week.