

TEEN SUICIDE

The following are some of the warning signs of teen suicide:

- Talks about suicide or wanting to die.
- Difficulty with eating and sleeping.
- Drastic changes in behaviors.
- Withdraws
- Lost of interest in hobbies and school.
- Gives away prized possessions.
- Has attempted suicide in past.
- Takes unnecessary risks.
- Recent loss.
- Preoccupied with death and dying.
- Loses interest in personal appearance.
- Increased use of alcohol and drugs.

How to help:

- Be direct. Talk openly and matter-of-factly about suicide.
- Be willing to listen. Allow expressions of feelings. Accept the feelings.
- Be non-judgmental. Don't debate whether suicide is right or wrong.
- Get involved. Become available. Show interest and support.
- Don't dare him/her to do it.
- Don't act shocked. This puts distance between you.
- Do not be sworn to secrecy. Seek support.
- Offer hope that alternatives are available.
- Take action. Remove means such as guns or pills.
- Get help from persons, EAP, or agencies specializing in crisis intervention and suicide prevention.
- Loses interest in personal appearance.

- Increased use of alcohol and drugs.

References: *American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry, 1998; American Association of Suicidology, 2001, Kim Holaway, Director -Student Services, Marana Unified School District (2002).*

Inform parents, school officials, employee assistance counselor, or crisis services, if you are concerned about a teenager's safety. Do something - not responding to a cry for help could have devastating consequences for the child and you.