

## Caregivers

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports suicide is one of the leading causes of death among children and young adults ages 10 to 24 years, occurring at a rate of:

- 14 out of 100 in youth ages 15 to 19
- 8 out of 100 children ages 10 to 14

One study found the most common precursors for suicidal behavior in youth are:

- Familial stressors, such as divorce or parental discord
- Relationship difficulties with a love interest
- Problems at school, such as bullying

While this information may seem grim, there is hope. Suicidal behavior is often a result of an underlying issue(s), such as:

- Depression
- Traumatic stress
- Anxiety
- Substance abuse

As with other chronic illness, these can be managed with the right help.

One method is strengthening one's proactive factors.

Proactive factors are a person's resources. There are many ways this can be done, such as:

- Accessing quality and effective care for your child's mental health or substance abuse issue
- Using community supports, such as AA, school, or a Big Brother/Big Sister program, to help your child learn healthy coping and problem-solving skills
- Approaching your loved one from a place of understanding and support.

## Self-Care

As a caregiver it is important for you to do things to take care of yourself. Some self-care activities are:

- Eating healthy
- Taking a hot bath
- Taking a nap
- Going to yoga or mindfulness class
- Talking to a trusted friend

This not only models healthy behavior for your loved ones, it also provides a needed relief from the stresses of caring from someone who suffers from a mental illness or substance abuse.

It is equally important to understand that it is normal to experience a range of emotions when your loved one has attempted to cause self-harm. You may feel:

- Sadness
- Self-blame
- Shock or disbelief
- Fear
- Anxiety
- Indifference
- Anger

Please remember that whatever you feel, you are not to blame for what has happened. Many people find counseling or therapy services helpful when learning to come to terms with what has happened.

## What to Tell Others

The decision about what to tell others is unique to each person and family. Some people and families want to limit their communication with the outside world. Other people find that sharing their experience is helpful.

Think about your loved one's comfort level.

Unfortunately, mental illness is still very misunderstood. So, your loved one may not feel safe having this information shared. Listen and support your loved one, even if you do not understand their decision(s).


To learn more about how to help someone who has attempted suicide go to **suicideline.org.au**.

To learn more about bullying and tips to stop it, go to **stopbullying.gov/media/facts/index.html**.

**"HOPE IS IMPORTANT BECAUSE IT CAN  
MAKE THE PRESENT MOMENT LESS  
DIFFICULT TO BEAR. IF WE BELIEVE THAT  
TOMORROW WILL BE BETTER, WE CAN  
BEAR A HARDSHIP TODAY."**

**-THICH NHAT HAHN**

A large yellow rectangular area with a dashed white sun in the top left and a dashed white cloud in the top right. A vertical white line runs down the right side of the area.


 University of Iowa Stead Family Children's Hospital


## S.A.F.E. Program

Information for Caregivers

---

Suicidal Adolescent Family Empowerment

 [uichildrens.org/health-library/suicidal-adolescent-family-empowerment-safe-program](http://uichildrens.org/health-library/suicidal-adolescent-family-empowerment-safe-program)



Changing Medicine  
Changing Kids' Lives.®