



# National Suicide Awareness Month

## SUICIDE IS NOT THE ANSWER

Every day, there are approximately 3,041 suicide attempts by young people in grades 9-12. Yet due to stigmas and taboos, this isn't talked about nearly enough. There are too many people of all ages – children, teens, and adults – who face suicide and who could have received help.

To combat this “silent epidemic” of suicide, September has been designated National Suicide Prevention Awareness Month. During this month, mental health advocates, suicide survivors, allies, and the community at large come together to spread awareness of this critical problem and– what each of us can do to lessen this problem. By working together, there's hope we can be a lifeline for those struggling and help save lives.

### Fighting This “Silent Epidemic”

Suicide has been called the “silent epidemic” because despite its wide scope and pervasiveness, it's not talked about by our society at large. It's an uncomfortable topic for many, yet most people have been affected by suicide in some way or another.

Clark Flatt of The Jason Foundation is one of the leaders bringing awareness to this battle. Founded in honor of his son's memory, The Jason Foundation provides training and resources for adults, teens, and community members to become aware of the warning signs of suicide.

So many teens who look like they have ideal happy lives, may secretly be struggling with depression, anxiety, or suicidal thoughts. Despite the difficulty in spotting the warning signs of suicide, The Jason Foundation, and the San Antonio Behavioral Healthcare Hospital believes that suicide is preventable.

### How to Support Those Struggling with Thoughts of Suicide

In order to prevent suicide, it's critical to know and spot the warning signs early. These differ for children, teens, and adults.


#### For Children

Many parents and adults are hesitant to speak with children about suicide because they're afraid that talking about it causes it. This is a misconception. The truth is, it's never too early to look for and discuss the warning signs in children.

**Warning signs for children ages 5-11 include:**

- Relationship issues with family and friends
- Changes in behavior, such as sleeping habits, eating habits, or withdrawing from relationships
- Chronic bullying, experiencing loss, and a previous history of suicide attempts
- Sudden decreasing interest or performance in school
- A preoccupation with death, or saying things like “No one will miss me when I'm gone”

*Parents who are concerned about a child should ask specific questions like, “Are you thinking about hurting or killing yourself?” It's important that children see that adults care, understand, and love them.*



**In 2017, there were more than 6,200 suicide deaths among adolescents and young adults ages 15-24, making it the second-leading cause of death for that age group.**



# There is Hope

## For Teens

According to the Jason Foundation, four out of five individuals considering suicide give some sign of their intentions. Some verbal or behavioral warning signs of teen suicide include:

- Threats of suicide (saying things like, “I’d be better off dead” or, “I won’t be bothering you much longer”)
- Depression, which was present in 90% of suicide.
- Increased irritability and anger (such as fighting)
- Decreased interest in sports, hobbies, or school
- A sudden change in appetite and appearance
- Making final arrangements such as giving away prized possessions, saying good-bye to loved ones, or planning their funeral

## For Adults

The warning signs of suicide in adults may include:

- Talking about wanting to die, being a burden to others, or experiencing great shame or guilt
- Feeling extremely sad, angry, or anxious
- Having the sense of hopelessness, being trapped, or having no reason to live
- Experiencing unbearable emotional or physical pain
- Taking dangerous risks such as reckless driving or using drugs and alcohol more often
- Saying goodbye, giving away items, and making a will
- Behavioral changes such as researching ways to die, dramatic changes in sleep patterns, or withdrawing from friends

## We Can All Make A Difference

Everyone can make a positive difference in reducing suicide. Here are some of the things anyone can do:

- Learn about the problem of teen suicide, including the signs of concern and steps you can take to prevent it
- Encourage local organizations – like sports teams, churches, youth groups, and others – to learn about youth suicide and how it can be prevented
- Be open to seeking professional support if you sense your child is struggling with depression or thoughts of self-harm
- Have honest, open discussions with your those experiencing suicidal thoughts where they can share their feelings in a supportive way, without judgment

### Representatives of:



By working together, we can spread awareness of the signs of suicide and help end this silent epidemic. If you know a youth who is showing any of the warning signs above, don’t hesitate to reach out for help. The team at San Antonio Behavioral Healthcare Hospital is here to help support you and your loved one. **Call (210) 541-5300 or visit us online today to get help.**

