

## Could Your Child or Teen be Suicidal?

Is your child expressing suicidal thoughts? Are you dealing with a teen who has attempted suicide? Are you wondering if it was really a suicide attempt? How do you know if she's really suicidal? What if he's just making empty threats?

It's easy to get confused about how to handle these difficult and emotionally charged situations. A note or a comment can be vague. It's normal to think perhaps she's making threats to play on your emotions. Regardless, any suicidal comments, gestures, threats or attempt must always be taken seriously.

You've probably heard it before but what does it mean? Taking a comment, a note, a threat or attempt seriously means getting professional help. For someone whose life is in immediate danger, professional help means a call to 911 for emergency medical assistance. Not sure if an attempt is actually life threatening? Respond to any attempt as if it is immediately life threatening. Let the professionals make the judgement call. That's what we're trained to do.

What about when there has been no attempt, only vague remarks, a comment here or there? Again, take those seriously. Ask, are you planning to kill yourself? Do you have plans to hurt yourself? You won't be planting ideas so don't be afraid to ask. If you feel concerned, go ahead and ask.

It's better to speak up and be wrong, than to be silent and have to live with the regrets of not having spoken up when you could have.

Start a conversation. Offer emotional support to get through the challenges behind those thoughts. Even if he says no, he's not planning to harm himself, he might still benefit from help dealing with the challenge that's behind the comments. Call and schedule an appointment with a mental health professional trained to do a suicide assessment. Make sure you inform the counselor about the need for a suicide assessment and ask that your child be seen right away. Don't put it off.

Suicide is usually an attempt to escape from a pain, either a physical pain or an emotional pain that feels intolerable. Taking it seriously will save lives.

To make it easier to get the help you need, give me a call at 636-795-3155. Let's schedule a time to talk over your concerns and make sure you and your child gets the help she needs. Remember, if it's a medical emergency call 911 first. Do not hesitate. Let's work together to make helping your child easier.