



Supporting youth at home:
Youth mental health
promotion and suicide
prevention

tips & resources

welcome

The AIC program is unique in its family-to-family delivery and its integration within school districts, but it also has unique content elements such as asking participants to consider a young person they are concerned during the train to gain valuable practice at communicating with them before there is a crisis. AIC provides prevention information on locking and limiting access to medications and firearms, and on how to promote mental health in the home. The AIC program includes collaborations in which families are provided a unique and safe space to share their lived experiences and connect with one another to develop relationships that extend beyond the program session.

Brought to you by: University of Washington (UW) SMART Center, UW School of Social Work and UW College of Education.



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supporting loved ones: a guide to recognizing and responding to suicide warning signs

If you are receiving this resource guide it is likely that you are worried that someone you love is at risk for suicide. By paying attention to warning signs you are already helping reduce the risk of a loved one dying by suicide. We encourage you to read this document and reflect on potential warning signs you may see in your loved one, commit to listening with empathy, asking with caring about suicide, and using available resources. There are many ways a parent or caregiver can increase a young person's resilience and buffer against suicide risk by building protective factors.

The simple act of listening and caring can go a long way.

Protective Factors

Skills, strengths, and resources that help people deal more effectively with stressful events



- Stabilizing factors
- Life skills including problem-solving and coping skills, ability to adapt to change etc.
- Self-esteem and a sense of purpose or meaning in life
- Cultural, religious, or personal beliefs that discourage suicide
- People whom you trust and with whom you can be vulnerable
- Community connection
- Access to health care (including mental health)

look/listen overview



risk factors (existing history)

Previous suicide attempt
Mental illnesses such as depression
Substance abuse issues
Social isolation
Easy access to lethal methods (e.g., firearms)
Bullying
Childhood abuse
Impulsive or aggressive tendencies
Relationship loss or family conflict
Major humiliation and shame
LGBTQ youth
Native American youth

warning signs (short-term signs)

Feeling like a burden
Being isolated
Increased anxiety
Researching ways to die
Increased anger or rage
Extreme mood swings
Expressing hopelessness
Sleeping too little or too much
Talking/posting about wanting to die
Making plans for suicide
Increase use of alcohol/substances
Sudden elation after a period of depression



If you see multiple warning signs, it's time to act. (CDC)



listen

Build a habit of regular check-ins with your child.
Keep your check-ins short and try to end them with affection and smiles.

If your child is cranky, remind them 'I'm always here for you.' Try again later.
Be gentle... "Honey, I'm concerned about you. And no, you're not in trouble."

Use empathy:

Put yourself in their shoes - Listen without judgment
Notice their emotions, Voice your acceptance of these emotions:
"This is really difficult stuff."

Your listening helps your child know your care.
Welcome their emotions (even if you disagree or don't understand them).
"I'm so glad you told me."

Don't rush to fix things. Sometimes your child just needs a trusted adult to listen.

ask/act overview



ask

Ask directly: Are you thinking about suicide?

Stay as calm as possible.

Ask these questions: Do you know when? Where? Do you have a plan?

Ask with Care. We do this because - Asking IS Caring.

act

Suicidal urges often rise and fall. Some youth act impulsively.

Easy access to meds, firearms, items used for suffocation, etc., adds danger.
Take the practical steps, below:

Practical steps for medications: Locked storage or removal

- Use a pill organizer to encourage correct dosing.
- Lock to limit access to remaining Rx & over-the-counter meds
- Dispose of unused medications
- To find medication/drug take-back sites: takebackyourmeds.org

Lock your firearms or store them outside the home.

- Lock firearms in a gun safe
- During times of crisis, it is legal to transfer firearms to family or friends (Emergency temporary transfer)
- Lock handguns and rifles in vehicles
- Law enforcement retailers may store your firearms temporarily.
- Lock ammunition separately
- Use a fast-access lock for home defense firearm.

connect overview



Crisis Resources

Mental Health or Substance Use Crisis Line (24/7 Support) Dial or text 988 (Emphasize)

The 988 Lifeline is a national network of local crisis centers that provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week in the United States, and connects you with local mental health resources.

Additional youth suicide crisis line & stabilization resources

For our LGBTQ Youth
Trevor Project
866.488.7386; or
text 678678

For our Trans Youth
877.565.8860

**For our Young
People of Color**
Text STEVE to 74174

Community Resources— Referral Finder for a mental health provider

Washington Mental Health Referral Services for Children and Teens (Seattle Children's Hospital)

Connects families with mental health providers in your community who accept new patients, works with your insurance, and fit your child's treatment needs. The Referral Service is accessible to children and teens 17 and under living in Washington State. Washington State funds this free service, and Seattle Children's operates it. Call 833-303-5437 Monday to Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Support in multiple languages is available.

<https://www.seattlechildrens.org/clinics/washington-mental-health-referral-service/>

Family Resources

NAMI

Online and in-person Family support groups

<https://www.nami.org/Support-Education/Support-Groups/NAMI-Family-Support-Group>

Dial 211

2-1-1 is a special abbreviated telephone number reserved in the North American Numbering Plan as an easy-to-remember three-digit code to reach information and referral services to health, housing, human, and social service organizations.

<https://www.211.org>

School Resources

Local School District

- Most school districts have social/emotional services available to students upon request. Consider partnering with your child's school to ensure adequate supports are in place by reaching out to your student's counselor or assistant principal.
- Members of a student's school-based mental health care team can include various team members across multiple disciplines. Team members may include:
 - School Social Worker
 - School Counselor
 - School Psychologist
 - School Nurse
 - Principal, Assistant Principal
 - IEP Case Manager



Interested in more information about AIC, contact Jennifer Stuber, at jstuber@uw.edu.
Or visit <https://smartcenter.uw.edu/asking-is-caring-aic/>