

## Warning Signs

*Suicidal thoughts*

*Substance abuse*

*Loss of purpose*

*Anxiety*

*Feeling trapped*

*Loss of hope*

*Withdrawal*

*Anger*

*Recklessness*

*Mood changes*

## Protective Factors

*No access to weapons*

*Close ties to family and friends*

*Problem solving skills*

*Support for seeking help*

*Treatment for addiction, depression, or mental health problems*

*Belief in self-preservation*

*Medical care*

## Youth Suicide Is Preventable!

- Oklahoma averages 71 youth suicides per year.
- According to the Oklahoma Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS 2011):
  - 14% of youth seriously considered attempting suicide during the 12 months before the survey.
  - 6% actually attempted suicide one or more times during the prior 12 months.
  - 1% made an attempt that required medical treatment.
- The suicide rate among Native American youth (14.4 deaths per 100,000) was 66% higher than the rate among whites and 2.8 times higher than the rate among blacks.
- Depression (41%), intimate partner problems (38%), and a crisis in the two weeks prior to the incident (30%) were leading circumstances surrounding youth suicides.
- Firearms were the leading method of suicides (50%), followed by hanging and strangulation (33%) and drug/poisoning (12%).

### Prevention

- Expand suicide prevention efforts among young adults, and ensure that suicide prevention programs are linked with professional mental health resources in the community.
- Parents and teachers should be taught to recognize the warning signs for suicide and encouraged to restrict teenagers' access to lethal means.
- Emphasize to physicians and other health providers the importance of screening families with children regarding access to firearms, prescription drugs, or other lethal methods.
- Develop and implement suicide prevention/intervention/post-intervention training for everyone who has access to students – parents, teachers, administrative staff, bus drivers, maintenance crews, cafeteria staff, substitute teachers, school volunteers, etc.
- Reduce school bullying. While bullying doesn't cause suicide, it can increase a person's risk.
  - **Start prevention early.** Intervening in bullying among younger children can have significant benefits as children enter the developmental stage when suicide risk begins to rise.
  - **Keep up with technology.** Bullying often takes place in areas hidden from adult supervision.
  - **Use a comprehensive approach.** Reducing the risk of school bullying and the risk of suicide requires intervention that focuses on sound mental health access for youth.
  - **Pay attention** to the needs of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth and youth who do not conform to the gender expectation of their specific community norm.

### Internet Resources

- [www.heartlineoklahoma.org](http://www.heartlineoklahoma.org)
- [www.suicidology.org](http://www.suicidology.org)
- Call: 1-800-273-TALK (8255) or 211
- American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (<http://www.afsp.org>)

**Live Injury-Free!**