

## SYMPTOMS OF DEPRESSION

Depression brings about major changes in brain chemistry, behavior, outlook and ability to function.

### UNDERLYING SYMPTOMS OF DEPRESSION WILL INCLUDE SEVERAL OF THE FOLLOWING:

- Depressed or irritable mood, problems with anger
- Losing interest and withdrawing from people/activities
- Significant changes in eating or weight
- Significant changes in sleeping habits
- Feeling exhausted, lack of energy
- Having problems concentrating or making decisions
- Moping around or feeling very agitated
- Feeling worthless or inappropriately guilty

### SPECIFIC SIGNS OF SUICIDE RISK INCLUDE:

- Seeing no hope for the future
- Having thoughts of death or killing him/herself
- Talking openly or indirectly about ending one's life
- Taking life-threatening risks
- Giving away personal possessions
- Gaining access to lethal means

### TREATMENT OPTIONS:

- Counseling
- Antidepressant medication
- Eliminating alcohol and drug use
- Re-establishing support from family/friends
- Regular exercise
- Good nutrition and nightly sleep
- Revisiting activities once enjoyed
- Spiritual support

With the right professional assistance and ongoing family and campus support, your student can go on to make the most of his/her college experience.



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Mailing Address:  
Mark Evans, Ph.D.  
University Counseling & Testing Center  
1590 East 13th, Eugene, OR 97403

University Counseling & Testing Center 346-3227  
University Health Center 346-2770  
Office of Student Life 346-3216  
Emergency (Campus Only, 24hr) 346-6666  
UO Crisis Center 346-4488

IF YOU OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW IS HAVING THOUGHTS ABOUT SUICIDE, CALL THE NATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION LIFELINE:  
**1.800.273.TALK (8255)**

Get connected immediately to a certified crisis center near you.  
Services are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

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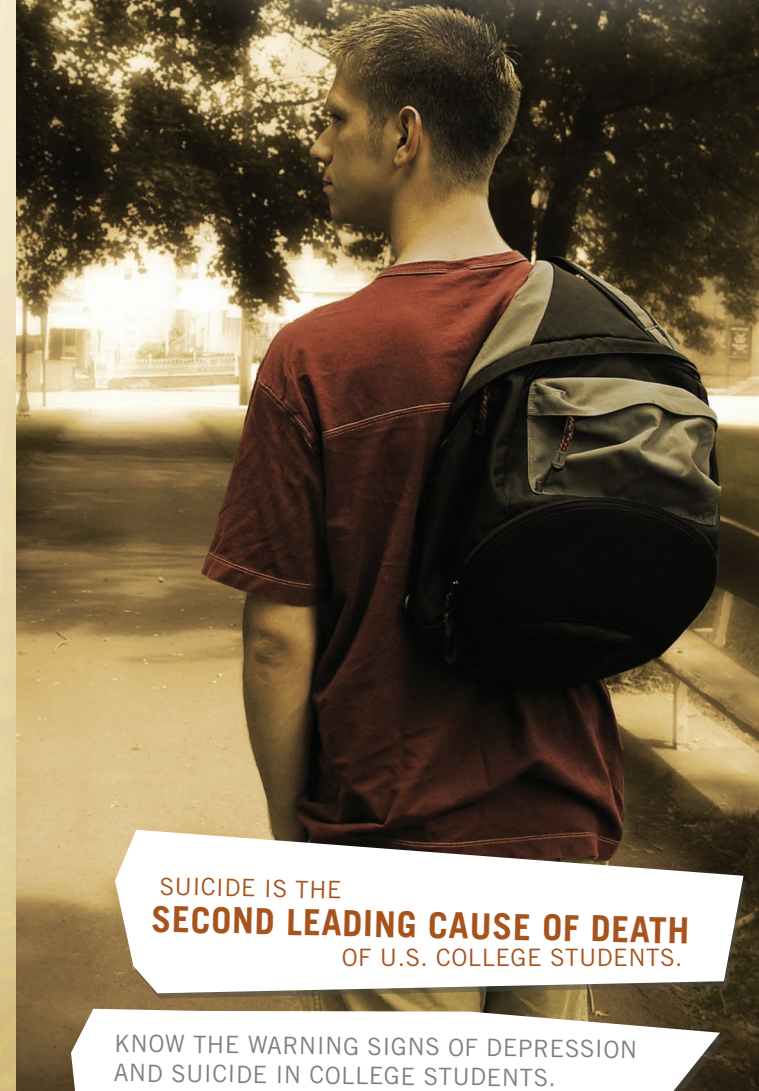
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SOMETIMES

“no news”

ISN'T

“good news”



SUICIDE IS THE  
**SECOND LEADING CAUSE OF DEATH**  
OF U.S. COLLEGE STUDENTS.

KNOW THE WARNING SIGNS OF DEPRESSION  
AND SUICIDE IN COLLEGE STUDENTS.



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## SUICIDE & COLLEGE STUDENTS

### THE CHALLENGE:

College offers great opportunity as well as unique challenges along the way. So why is suicide the 2nd leading cause of death of college students, killing more than 1000 students every year? Given that one in ten college students seriously consider suicide in any given year, what can you do as a parent to help reduce the risk?

Stress with the college experience, sleep loss and substance abuse can lead to depression, a key factor in suicide deaths. Up to forty percent of college students report experiencing depression during an academic year. Parents, college staff and friends need to be able to distinguish the normal temporary college blues from depression. Those students at greatest risk of suicide have a past history of attempts and a personal or family history of depression.

## UNDERSTANDING DEPRESSION

Leaving the support of family and community, and dealing with the increasing challenges of college life can cause your student to struggle. Your student may develop persistent problems with depression like:

- Having difficulty getting along with others
- Losing connections with family and friends
- Struggling to keep up with college course work or experiencing dropping grades
- Taking poor care of themselves
- Making choices later regretted

## suicide risks

➔ The risk for suicide may be highest for freshman and graduate students, though the risk for each year of college is significant. Keep your eyes and ears open for any persistent change in your student for the worse. Knowing the warning signs of depression and suicide will be important now and in the future.

➔ Deteriorating relationships or the death of someone important to your student can be key triggers for depression and suicidal thinking, especially for those with a personal or family history of depression. Be closely attentive and supportive if your student suffers the loss of a relationship.

➔ While women are more likely to attempt suicide, young men are six times more likely to die by suicide than young women, ages 18 – 24. Men often mask their emotional pain, making it more difficult to recognize depression and suicidal thinking. Men frequently express depression with anger and conflict, increased alcohol and drug use, and physical complaints, and become poorly motivated and productive.

➔ Alcohol and drugs can make your student's depression and suicidal thinking much worse. Alcohol problems are more common than most college parents realize, with almost 1 in 5 U.S. college students suffering alcohol-related problems last year. Alcohol, itself, accounts for more than 1000 college student deaths a year. More than half of all college suicides involve alcohol or other drugs. Eliminating alcohol and/or drug use is highly recommended for students with depression and/or suicidal thinking.



# When your student is struggling and shows signs of depression or suicidal thinking, take the time to:

### CONNECT

- Connect with your student. Let your student know you are concerned. Be understanding. Ask what is causing him/her the most problems. Show your support.

### ASK

- Ask your student, "Have you been feeling hopeless? Have you had thoughts of ... wanting to be dead? ...killing yourself?" Be direct, as these questions won't put the idea into his/her head. Get details: The more planning and lethal the method s/he has envisioned, the greater the risk.

### SHOW LOVE & SUPPORT

- If your student has thoughts of death or suicide, do your best to understand what problems might have led to them. Listen empathically and without judgment. Be calm. Don't let your own fear or anger get in the way of showing that you care and want to help. Convey a sense of choice and help him/her see some positive aspects in his/her life, including the ongoing support of family and community. Emphasize your belief in your student's future, and your desire for your student to stay alive to realize that future.

### ENCOURAGE COUNSELING

- If your student is depressed or is thinking about death/suicide, encourage him/her to call our campus counseling service or campus health center as soon as possible. Your student may need support to do this. Counseling and medical services are confidential (except in cases of threat of imminent harm). Campus services are often available free of charge or at a low cost.

### TAKE ACTION

- If you are unsure how to proceed, or if your student refuses to see a professional, you can call the university's counseling office and other university personnel to alert them of your concerns.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT DEPRESSION, SUICIDE PREVENTION AND COLLEGE STUDENTS, VISIT [WWW.ULIFELINE.ORG](http://WWW.ULIFELINE.ORG)

OR THE SUICIDE PREVENTION RESOURCE CENTER AT [WWW.SPRC.ORG](http://WWW.SPRC.ORG)

## HOW PARENTS CAN HELP

Family cohesion can help protect against suicide. Establish and maintain regular support and communication with your student. Take the time to know his/her friends, as well as supportive college personnel. Let your student know how to reach you to talk about personal victories as well as with any struggles that last more than a few days.

### Encourage:

- Balance in your student's college life
- Healthy relationships
- Good nutrition
- Restful sleep
- Regular exercise and daily routine

Spiritual support can also be a protective factor. The college experience, itself, may be protective, as the suicide rate for college students is half that of their non-college peers

