

**SUICIDE INDICATORS**

) Often, young people who are drawn to suicide give overt indications about their intentions. Unfortunately, others frequently overlook these signs or neglect to take them seriously. It is critical that young people and adults alike be aware of these indicators and understand that these signs warrant immediate action.

**Talking about suicide**

Many young people who die by suicide talk about it beforehand, often in great detail. Never assume that someone who talks about suicide is just kidding. In fact, this is a serious warning sign. Every effort should be made to find professional help for the young person, immediately.

**Giving away prized possessions**

A young person who intends suicide may get rid of things that once were important, often saying things like, “I don’t need this any more.” He or she may appear to be saying goodbye.

**Use of alcohol or other drugs**

) Use, or increased use, of alcohol or other drugs can signal an attempt to self-medicate feelings of sadness or hopelessness. Look for physical signs, such as bloodshot eyes, hangovers, and generally being “out of it,” as well as evidence such as drug paraphernalia; bottles and cans, etc. Be aware, too, that young people often lie about their use.

**Depression followed by a sudden improvement in mood**

A very dangerous time in the treatment of depression is the point at which the individual begins to feel better—perhaps just enough better to act on self-destructive impulses. A sudden lift of spirits in someone who is depressed is cause for increased vigilance, and the professional who is supervising treatment should be alerted.

## Treating Depression

**What treatments are available for depression?**

Drugs can help by correcting your brain chemistry. Antidepressant drugs may be prescribed by a physician. Traditional “talking” therapies also are helpful. Many consider a combination of drugs and psychotherapy to be the most effective treatment.

Two key points to remember about treatment:

- Treatment must be supervised by a professional. Don’t attempt to treat yourself, and do follow your doctor’s instructions.
- Successful treatment takes time. Stick with it. Don’t give up, and don’t stop the minute you feel a little better.