



SEPTEMBER: SUICIDE AND SELF HARM

– What Caregivers Need to Know –

Basic Definitions

Suicide: The act of intentionally ending one's own life.

Suicidal ideation: Thinking about, considering, or planning suicide

Self-Harm: Deliberately injuring oneself, including cutting, burning, hitting, or scratching often as a way to cope with emotional pain

Remember! Self-harm and suicidal ideation is common among people ages 15-24. Self-harm is a risk factor for suicidal ideations or behaviors but may not necessarily lead to death by suicide. While it can feel scary, talking about self-harm and suicide, it is key to building a safe listening space and a crisis plan for the individual.

Tips and Strategies

- **Promote Open Dialogue:** Encourage conversations about feelings and stressors. Don't be afraid to ask the individual direct questions. Stay focused on the individual and be sure to process your own feelings at a later time.
- **Pay Attention to Warning Signs:** A person struggling with suicidal ideation may show warning signs in their speech, behavior, or mood. This may include but is not limited to feeling like a burden, reporting no reason to live, isolation, withdrawal, giving away possessions, depression, irritability, or a sudden change in mood.
- **Develop Emergency Plans:** Reach out for support from a professional including the individual's doctor or the school wellness team. Identify clear steps to take if or when the individual shows warning signs. A crisis plan can include names of social support, preferred places or items, and replacement behaviors.

Resources and Links

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline can be reached at **1-800-273-TALK (8255)** or the Crisis Text Line by texting **Text HOME to 741741**

DC's mobile crisis unit, CHAMPS can be reached at **(202) 481-1440**.

[The Trevor Project](#) the leading organization providing crisis support to LGBTQIA+ youth, offers resources for young people who may be experiencing suicidal ideation.

[The Jason Foundation](#) has resources for caregivers to understand and engage in prevention efforts regarding suicide

