DEPRESSION IS AN ILLNESS

SYMPTOM CHECK LIST

♦ Feelings of guilt, worthlessness, helplessness
♦ Persistent sad, anxious, or “empty” mood
♦ Feelings of hopelessness, pessimism
♦ Loss of interest or pleasure in hobbies and activities that you once enjoyed, including sex
♦ Insomnia, early-morning awakening, or oversleeping
♦ Appetite and/or weight loss or overeating and weight gain
♦ Decreased energy, fatigue, being “slowed down”
♦ Thoughts of death or suicide, suicide attempts
♦ Restlessness, irritability
♦ Difficulty concentrating, remembering, making decisions
♦ Persistent physical symptoms that do not respond to treatment, such as headaches, digestive disorders and chronic pain

SYMPTOMS OF DEPRESSION IN CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS

Although these symptoms of depression may fit all children and adolescents at one time or another, it is the change in behaviors and the duration of those behaviors that are important. If any abrupt change occurs in the child/adolescent and if this change lasts approximately two weeks or longer, it would be wise to consult a mental health professional for evaluation and help.

☐ Lack of interest in activities and interpersonal relationships
☐ Change in appetite
☐ Change in sleep pattern
☐ Loss of energy
☐ Blaming oneself inappropriately
☐ Negative feelings about self
☐ Feelings of sadness, hopelessness, and worry
☐ Inability to concentrate or pay attention
☐ Thoughts or fantasies about death
☐ Aggressive or negative behaviors
☐ Increased agitation
☐ Increased physical aches, pains, and complaints
☐ Increased substance use
☐ Declining academic performance

MOTIVES FOR YOUTH SUICIDE

- To seek help.
- To escape from an intolerable situation.
- To get relief from a terrible state of mind.
- To try to influence some particular person.
- To show how much they loved someone.
- To make things easier for others.
- To make people feel sorry for them.
- To make people understand how desperate they were feeling.
- To find out whether they are really loved.
- Fear of loss of control.
- Desire to die.

GAY, LESBIAN, BISEXUAL & TRANSGENDER YOUTH

- In regards to completed suicide there are no national statistics of suicide rates among gay, bisexual, lesbian individuals.

- Regard to suicide attempts State/National studies have reported that youth who are homosexual/bisexually active have higher rates of suicide thoughts attempts than their heterosexual counterparts.


DO’s & DON’Ts FOR SUICIDE PREVENTION

DO:
- Take the threat seriously.
- Be direct: ask the person if s/he is contemplating suicide.
- Let the person know that you care and want to help but be realistic about how you can help.
- Explain that you must contact a trusted adult (i.e. teacher, coach, minister, counselor, social worker, relative, neighbor); if the person protests, remind her/him that s/he trusted you enough to share her/his feelings, now s/he must trust you enough to know what to do.
- Be willing to listen.
- Be non-judgmental.
- Stay focused on the problem that suicide is designed to resolve. Offer hope that it can be solved by other means.
- Stress that suicide is permanent and irreversible.
- Use his/her ambivalence to your own advantage.
- If there’s an immediate risk, call 911.

DON’T:
- Don’t offer simple solutions to serious problems.
- Don’t tell him/her that everything will be O.K.
- Don’t try to minimize his/her feelings or situation or try to tell him/her how to feel.
- Don’t be sworn to secrecy.
- Don’t leave the person alone until you can arrange for support, either immediate or long-term.

AVAILABLE RESOURCES

When a person is in crisis s/he may have difficulty identifying people/organizations within the community who can provide assistance and support. Below is a list of such persons and organizations. Please contact them if you or someone you know needs help.

People You May Already Know...
- Friend
- Family Member
- Teacher
- Coach
- Principal
- Guidance Counselor
- School Social Worker
- School Nurse
- Doctor
- Therapist
- Clergy

Additional Sources of Help in Your Community...
- Infoline - 24 hour crisis line in Connecticut Dial 2-1-1
- CHILD ABUSE & NEGLECT Hotline (1-800-842-2288) 24 hour youth protective services
- Runaway Hotline (1-800-621-4000)
- Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual & Transgendered Youth Resources call 2-1-1 for information
- Substance Abuse/Mental Health Resources – Dial 2-1-1