

CELEBRATING NATIONAL CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH



MAY 2019 RESOURCE SHARING

May is National Children's Mental Health Awareness month. This yearly event is dedicated to increasing the dialogue and decreasing the stigma around mental health. This year's theme is **"Suicide Prevention: Strategies that Work"**. The theme is important because suicide is the second leading cause of death among children, youth, and adolescents ages 10 to 24, behind automobile accidents.

If you are concerned that a member of your household may be suicidal, there are practical steps you can take to help keep them safe.

1. **Call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, 1-800-273-TALK (1-800-273-8255)**, for support and to find out about resources in your area. You can also urge your family member to call the hotline for support. It's accessible 24/7. You can also **text TALK to 741741** or contact **Dauphin County Crisis Intervention at (717) 232-7511**.
2. **Reduce easy access to dangerous substances at home** (the *means* by which your loved one could commit suicide).
 - ◆ **Firearms**—First suicide attempts with firearms are 85% fatal. It is extremely important to remove them from your home until things improve or second best, lock them and the ammunition separately.
 - ◆ **Medications**—Keep medications under lock and key. Dispose of excess medications safely.
 - ◆ **Alcohol**—Alcohol can both increase the chances someone will make an unwise choice, like attempting suicide, and increase the lethality of a drug overdose. Keep only small quantities at home.
3. **Other strategies**
 - ◆ Take any suicidal talk or behavior seriously. It's a cry for help.
 - ◆ Speak up if you're worried. You can't make a person suicidal by showing that you care.
 - ◆ Respond quickly in a crisis. It's important to evaluate the immediate danger a person is in. Those at highest risk for committing suicide in the near future have a specific suicide **PLAN**, the **MEANS** to carry out the plan, a **TIME SET** for doing it and an **INTENTION** to do it. **Do not, under any circumstances, leave a suicidal person alone.** Contact one of the resources listed in #1 above.
 - ◆ Offer help and support. Let your loved one know he or she is not alone and that you care. Many suicide attempts occur with little planning during a short-term crisis.
 - ◆ If your family member has had suicidal thoughts in the past, it's a good idea to have a crisis plan, or course of action if a crisis situation should occur again.

Excerpted from: <https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/means-matter/>
<https://www.nami.org/Find-Support/Family-Members-and-Caregivers/Preventing-Suicide>
<https://www.helpguide.org/articles/suicide-prevention/suicide-prevention.htm/>

Log onto <https://www.ffcmh.org/> to learn more about Awareness month and related activities and information. Take time to browse their website and learn how this organization supports both families and children's mental health. Also check out this link to SAMHSA <https://blog.samhsa.gov/2019/05/01/shining-a-light-on-suicide-prevention-strategies>

<https://seizetheawkward.org/> Provides tips to help teens and young adults create a safe space for their friends to open up about mental health challenges.