



OLV HEALTH & WELLNESS MINISTRY

September 2017 Article

Suicide Among Youth

Suicide is a serious public health problem that affects many young people. It is the third leading cause of death for ages 10-24; and the second leading cause of death for college-age youth and ages 12-18. Suicide results in approximately 4,600 lives lost each year.

- More young people survive suicide attempt than die. A nationwide survey of high school students in the U.S. found that 16% of students reported seriously considered suicide, 13% reported creating a plan and 8% reported trying to take their own life in the 12 months preceding the survey.
- Each year, approximately 157,000 youth between the ages of 10-24 are treated in Emergency Departments across the U.S. for self-inflicted injuries.

There are several factors can put a person at risk for suicide, but having these risk factors does not always mean the young person will attempt suicide. Risk factors include: family history of suicide, history of depression, other mental health problems, easy access to lethal means, alcohol and drug use, exposure to previous suicidal behavior by others, and residential mobility that might lessen opportunities for developing healthy social connections and support systems.

Suicide affects all youth, but some groups are at higher risk than others:

Boys are more likely than girls to die from suicide. Of the reported suicides in the age 10-24 age group, 81% were males and 19% were female.

Warning signs that a young person may be contemplating suicide imminently include:

- Thinking or talking about or threatening suicide; seeking a way to kill oneself; increased substance abuse; feelings of purposelessness, anxiety, being trapped or hopeless; withdrawing from people and activities; and expressing unusual anger, recklessness or mood changes.

Prevention efforts:

- General suicide awareness education, school and community gatekeeper programs, screening and peer support programs, crisis centers and hotlines, restriction of access to lethal means, counseling and clinical interventions.
- Participation in school group activities, clubs and sports, church youth groups, positive family interactions and developing strong family ties.
- Developing strong faith base within the family, prayer time with family, such as, the rosary after dinner. Select Readings for Sunday Mass as part of family time. These Readings can be found in the weekly Sunday Bulletin.

References: www.cdc.gov/healthcommunication/toolstemplates/entertainment/tips/suicideryouth.html.