



Moving Beyond the Crisis

Once you acknowledge your child is at a difficult point in life, you can start to move toward turning things around. It may be a difficult and frightening time for you, your child and other members of your family. Change will require motivation, commitment, practice and, most of all, it will be necessary to work together. The goal is to help your child find other solutions to problems, to build strengths and develop good coping skills. Your child must be an active participant in creating a plan to make things better.

Do not try to do it alone. Seek outside help. Suicide prevention is a community responsibility.

Consult with a medical professional

Your family physician is a good place to start.

Questions to ask:

- Is my child is depressed?
- Are anti-depressants required? Recent research has indicated that some youth may not do well on anti-depressants and might actually be at a higher risk for suicide when on anti-depressants. Educate yourself about this class of drugs and be sure you are making an informed decision.
- Who will monitor my child and how often?
- What other changes are necessary?
- How can I find a therapist to work with us?

Build a safety net for you and your family

Seek out caring and supportive people to help you.

People you may want to include:

- Resources at your child's school, such as the principle and vice principle, a guidance counselor, your child's teachers, the school nurse
- People at your place of worship, such as clergy and other members of the community
- Community agencies
- Employee family assistance program
- Other family members and friends
- Family physician
- Community health centre
- Parent support groups

Work with others to develop a care plan for your child. Inform your "team" of what has happened and ask their advice on how to improve your child's coping and problem solving skills. Be sure to involve your child in any planning.

Get family and individual counseling

An outside perspective can make a big difference.

You may want to:

- Improve communication skills (your own, your child's and the skills of other family members)
- Learn more about family dynamics
- Find out more about teenage development and issues faced by youth today
- Discover new problem solving and coping skills

Work with your child to strengthen life skills

| Life skill | Suggested strategies |
|-------------------|---|
| Problem solving | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify problems and prioritize (which is most distressing)• Break the problem into more manageable pieces• Look at solutions• Use past experiences or even others' experiences to find solutions• Identify strengths and talents |
| Social connection | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify ways for your child to be more involved at home (help with housework, pets and siblings)• Identify volunteer opportunities in school and community• Identify sources of peer support• Find a mentor• Celebrate every step forward |
| Communication | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify available resources, such as books, videos and parenting resource centres (the library has many resources)• Investigate courses on communication• Identify other community resources and programs• Practice new skills• Celebrate the small gains as well as the big successes |