

LEARN Saves Lives: Suicide Prevention Training

W FOREFRONT
SUICIDE PREVENTION

*Please complete the
pre-training survey here:*

https://redcap.link/fis_learn_pre



*Please download the
participant packet here:*

https://redcap.link/staff_docs



60-90 min Educator/Staff Training

Trainer Name / School

Date of Training

Suicide Prevention at our School

Forefront's Mission

Forefront Suicide Prevention is a Center of Excellence at the University of Washington.

Our mission is to help people take action to prevent suicide in their communities.



LEARN



Today's in-person training



This training will take approximately [60-90] minutes.



There will be one small group activity.



Questions? Let us know!

Take care

This training covers a topic that can be emotionally challenging for many people. Feel free to step out for a moment if you need to take a break.

We encourage you to:

- Respect other views, beliefs, and stories
- Keep any personal information shared today to yourself
- Take care of yourself after this training



LEARN

Learning objectives



1

Explain the public health issue of youth suicide and why young people may consider suicide

2

Identify, understand, and be ready to support someone who may be at risk for suicide

3

Apply the LEARN steps in a practice scenario



Learning objective 1:

Explain the public health issue of suicide and why young people may consider suicide.



What we know

Suicide affects all communities

Asking about suicide doesn't cause suicide

Suicide results from multiple complex factors



LEARN

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What protects against suicide?

- Connections to friends, family, culture, and community
- Limited access to lethal methods (e.g., firearms, medications)
- Coping and problem-solving skills
- Access to physical and mental health care

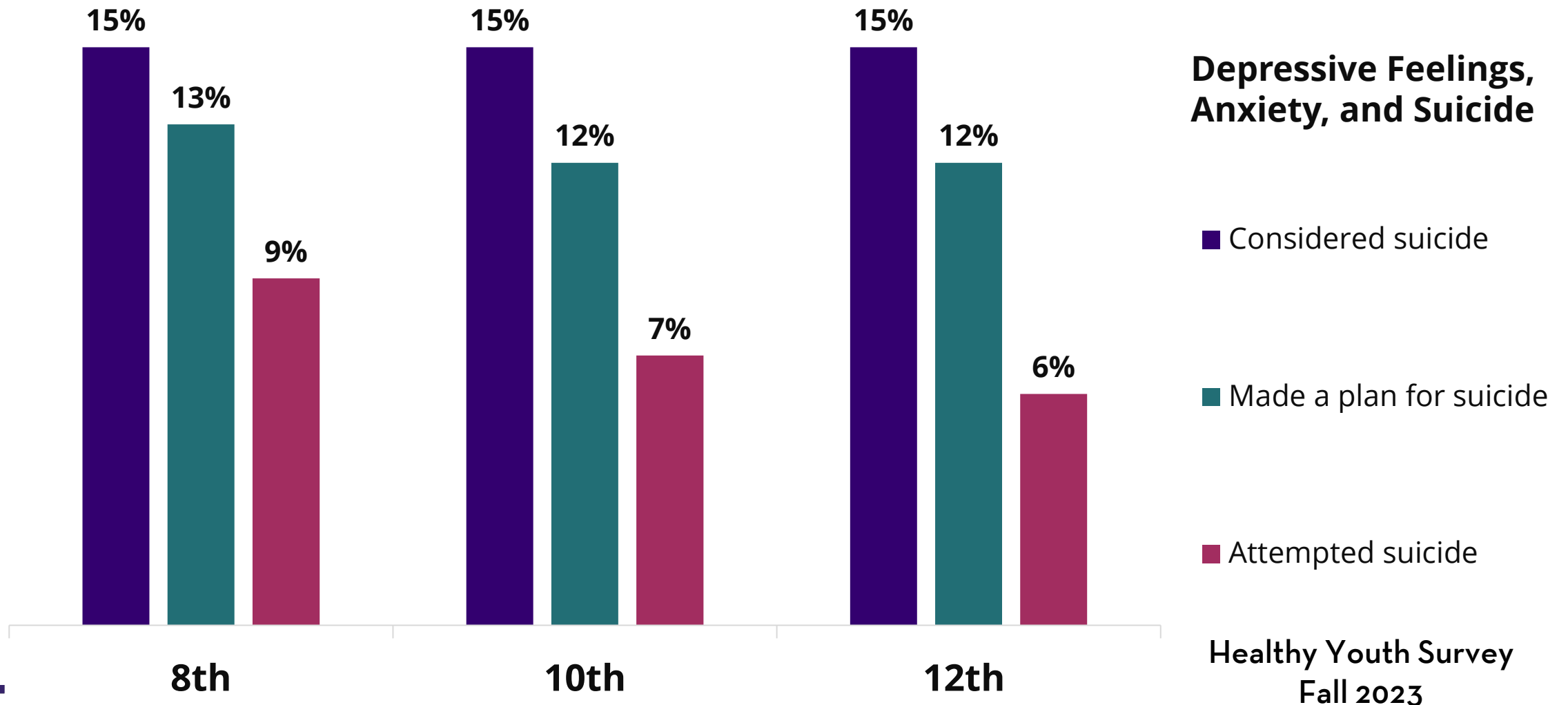


Youth in the US, 2021

Suicide is the
2nd leading cause
of death among
those ages 10-24

Youth suicides
account for
15% of all suicides

What Washington youth are saying





Suicidal thinking

Suicide isn't always about
wanting to die.

**It's about wanting
to end overwhelming pain.**

A woman with long red hair, smiling, stands in a classroom. She is wearing a black sleeveless top and a watch on her left wrist. She is holding a small object in her hands. In the background, a whiteboard is visible with some handwritten text, including "GIVE FEEDBACK" and "FEE".

What's my role as an educator?



Language matters



Instead of saying
“committed suicide”,
Let’s say **“died by suicide”**
or **“took their own life”**





Learning objective 2:

Identify, understand, and be ready to support someone who may be at risk for suicide

Our model:

Look for signs

Empathize & listen

Ask about suicide

Reduce the danger

Next steps





Look for signs

Look for signs

Empathize & listen

Ask about suicide

Reduce the danger

Next steps



Look for warning signs



**Emotions,
Feelings**

**Actions,
Behaviors**

Experiences



Look for warning signs



Emotions, Feelings

- Depression, anxiety
- Anger, irritability, agitation
- Unusual mood swings
- Feeling hopeless/helpless
- Loneliness
- Shame, humiliation
- Emotional/physical pain
- Sudden unexplainable joy after a period of depression

Actions, Behaviors

- Withdrawing
- Isolating
- Substance use
- Giving away prized possessions
- Acquiring lethal means
- Risky/reckless behavior
- Joking/frequent statements about death
- Self-injury
- Threats against self or others

Experiences

- Significant life changes or loss
- Bullying, harassment
- Discrimination linked to sexual orientation, gender identity, and/or race/ethnicity
- Personal and/or historical trauma
- Previous suicide attempts or family history of suicide
- Access to lethal means



Empathize & Listen

Look for signs

Empathize & listen

Ask about suicide


Reduce the danger

Next steps



Brené Brown on empathy





**A student tells you
they are struggling.
Which is the best
way to demonstrate
empathy?**

1. Offer solutions to fix the problem – after all, you don't want to see them hurting.

2. Share a story about a time that something similar happened to you.

3. Sit with them and say, "It sounds like you're going through a lot right now."

4. Pull up a funny video on your phone to help cheer them up.



Components of empathy

Helpful things to say:

*I'm so glad you told me.
Tell me more, I'm listening.*



**Try to see the
world as others
see it**



**Be non-
judgmental**



**Validate
another's
feelings**



**Communicate
understanding**



Ask about suicide

Look for signs

Empathize & listen

Ask about suicide

Reduce the danger

Next steps



When do I ask?

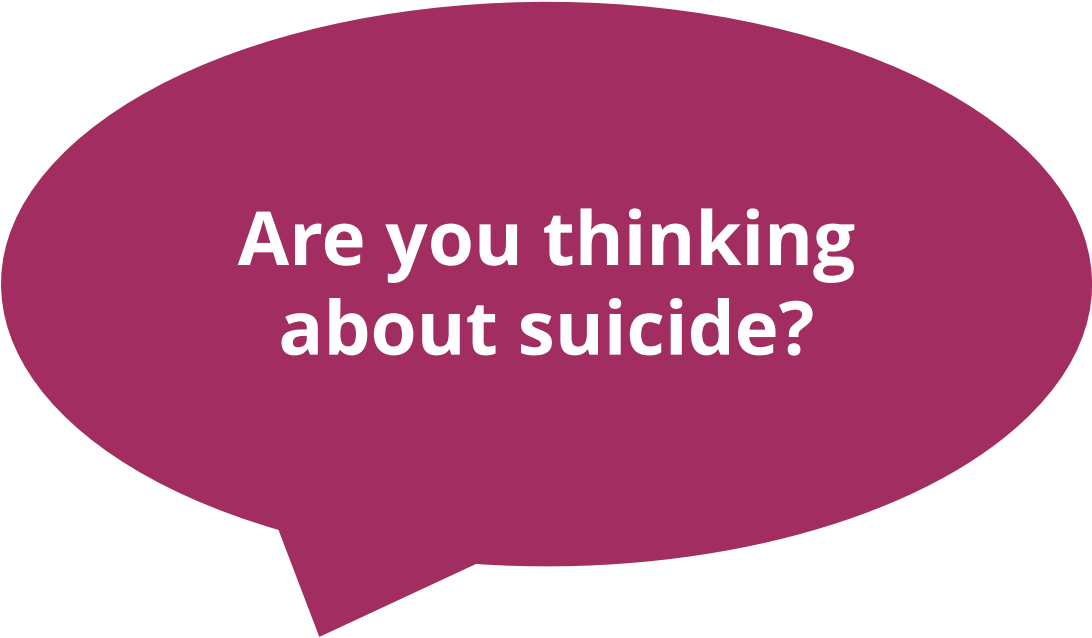
- Multiple signs
- Big changes in a person's life or behavior
- When your gut tells you to

**Concerned?
JUST ASK**



Ask directly

- Be courageous and direct
- Avoid vague language



**Are you thinking
about suicide?**



**Are you thinking
about killing
yourself?**



How do I ask about suicide?



Sometimes when people are...

_____,
_____,

they're thinking about suicide.

Are you thinking about
suicide?

**Insert any warning signs
you see here!**

Example:

"Sometimes when people feel like things don't matter anymore and they're isolating from friends, they're thinking about suicide. Are you thinking about suicide?"



Let's debrief

How did it feel
to say the word
"suicide?"



What if they say **no**?

- Stay neutral and non-judgmental
- Let them know you care
- If you are still concerned, gather more information and ask again. If they still say no, ask:
“If you were thinking about suicide, who would you talk to?”
- Move on to the R and N steps

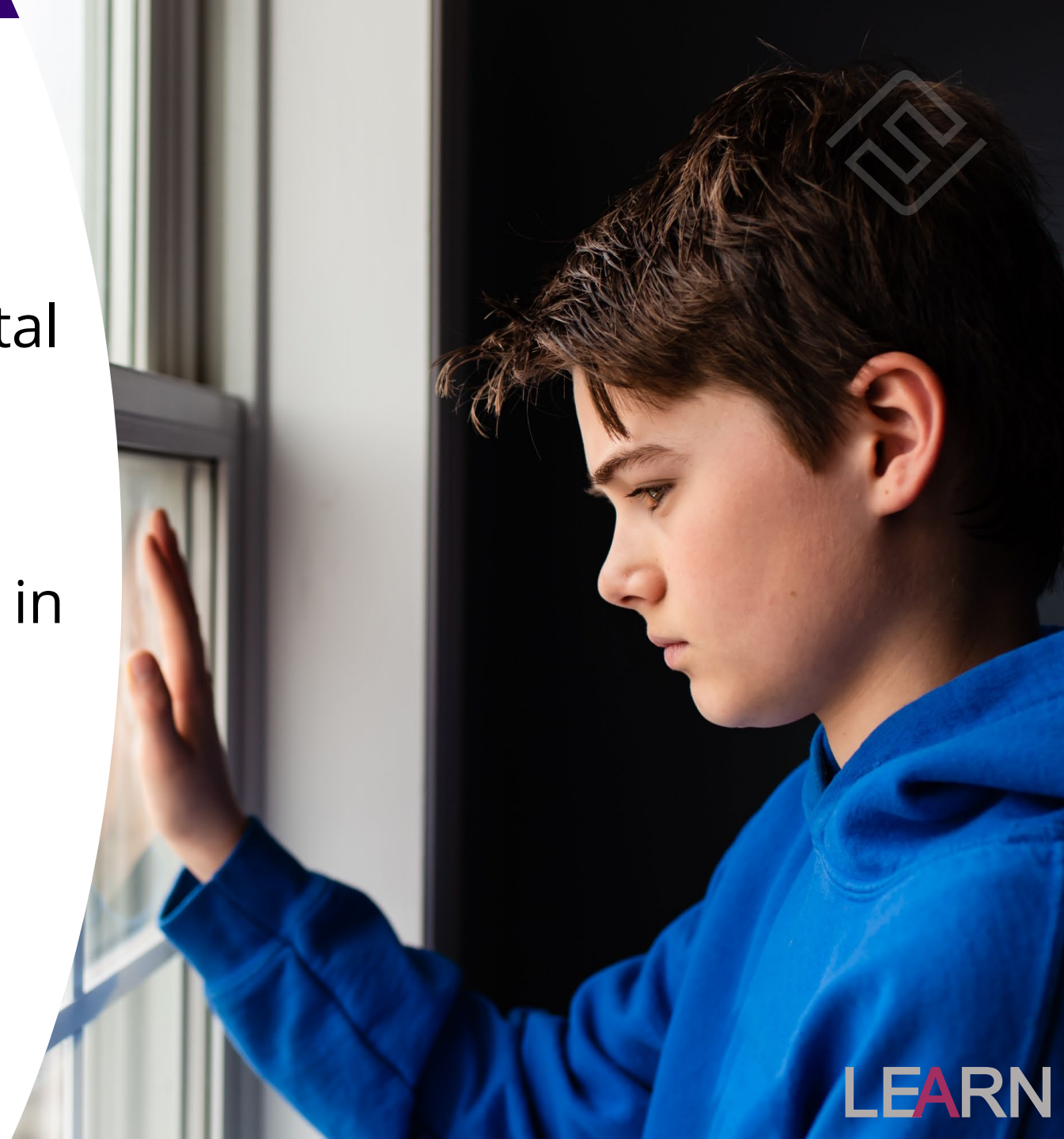


What if they say **yes**?

- Stay neutral and non-judgmental
- Take it seriously
- Thank them for their honesty
- Acknowledge the pain they are in
- Move on to the R and N steps
- Get support for yourself next



They ask you not to tell anyone. How can you respond?





IF THEY SAY YES

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Look for signs

Empathize & listen

Ask about suicide

Reduce the danger

Next steps

Reduce the danger



Important follow up questions



Have you
thought about
how you might
end your life?

Do you have
access to those
methods?

Have you
thought about
when you
might do this?

Remember: Putting time and distance between a suicidal person and the methods they may use can save their life!

Locking and limiting access



Firearms

- *Lock up all firearms, including those used for home defense*
- **Limit Access:**
 - Youth should not have unsupervised access to firearms

Medications

- *Lock up most medications – prescription and over-the-counter*
- **Limit Access:**
 - Keep a week's supply available
 - Keep only 1-day dose unlocked during mental health crisis

In your own home

- **Lock up today:**
 - Firearms
 - Prescription medications
 - Over-the-counter medications
- **Also lock up in a crisis:**
 - Alcohol and drugs
 - Belts, ropes, plastic bags
 - Knives, sharps, car keys
 - Chemicals, pesticides



Want to learn more? Visit
saferhomescoalition.org

SAFER HOMES
SUICIDE AWARE

The **R**step at school

Creating a safe learning environment includes:

- Reduce dangers in the school environment – lock up and monitor
- Follow school crisis plans and protocols
- Report safety concerns immediately





Next steps

Look for signs

Empathize & listen

Ask about suicide

Reduce the danger

Next steps



Next steps to take

Use a warm handoff immediately

- **Never leave a student in crisis alone**
- Relay as much information as possible
- Personally connect them to a counselor/crisis team member
 - If possible, explain the situation with the student present
- Follow crisis plan protocols



Helpful resources in a crisis



Suicide & Crisis Lifeline:

- Press 1 for veteran services
- Oprima 2 para español
- Press 3 for the Trevor Project
- Press 4 for Native and Strong in Washington



Download more
resources here!

Crisis Text Line:

Text "HEAL" to 741741

- Mande AYUDA para español

Trans Lifeline:

1-877-565-8860

The Trevor Project:

1-866-488-7386



Learning objective 3:

Apply the LEARN steps in a practice scenario.

The LEARN Conversation





The LEARN Conversation

What warning signs were concerning?

How was empathy displayed in the video?

How did they ask directly about suicide?

How did they address removing and reducing danger?

What next steps were taken?



Practicing the LEARN steps



Meet Alex

Alex is withdrawing and isolating from friends *(and family)*; including increased absences at school.
Alex is struggling with the increased demands of school and a part-time job and is easily overwhelmed lately.
(Alex also has easy access to large quantities of medication.)



Partner up &
choose roles



Practice the
LEARN steps



Change roles
after 4
minutes



Download
the full
exercise
here:



How did it go?

1. What did you notice or experience as you practiced each role?
2. How did it feel to say the word suicide?



Review: Learning objectives



1

Explain the public health issue of youth suicide and why young people may consider suicide

2

Identify, understand, and be ready to support someone who may be at risk for suicide

3

Apply the LEARN steps in a practice scenario

Action steps you can take today



**Use what
you've learned
to reach out to
someone in
distress**



**Say "died by
suicide"**



**Add 24-hour
crisis resources
into your
phone**



**Make your
community
safer to help
prevent suicide**

School and community resources





Thank you!

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Please complete the post-training survey:

https://redcap.link/fis_learn_post



Visit us at: inthe forefront.org

   inthe forefrontwa

Questions? Concerns?
Email ffront@uw.edu

Citations



What We Know

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- Bailey E, Spittal MJ, Pirkis J, Gould M, Robinson J. Universal Suicide Prevention in Young People. Crisis. 2017;38(5):300-308. doi:10.1027/0227-5910/a000465

What Protects Against Suicide?

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Risk and Protective Factors, Violence Prevention. Published September 6, 2018. <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/suicide/riskprotectivefactors.html>

What Washington Youth are Saying

- Data from HYS 2021- WASHINGTON: Anxiety, Depression, Suicidal Feelings and Action

Suicidal Thinking

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Look for Warning Signs

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- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Risk and Protective Factors, Violence Prevention. Published September 6, 2018. <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/suicide/riskprotectivefactors.html>
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- <https://www.cdc.gov/msmhealth/stigma-and-discrimination.htm>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/substance-use/index.htm>
- <http://www.selfinjury.bctr.cornell.edu/resources.html>

Hidden Warning Signs

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Components of Empathy

- Wiseman T. A concept analysis of empathy. J Adv Nurs. 1996;23:1162-1167. doi:10.1046/j.1365-2648.1996.12213.x

What's In Your Home?

- Drugfree.org/newsroom
- <https://hiprc.org/3interventionstoolkit/>
- <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3553495/>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/65/wr/mm6519a7.htm>

Make Your Home Safer

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