

Suicide Prevention

Suicide is among the most difficult things to understand. Preventing suicide occurs on many levels and across environments. Encouraging healthy habits, developing coping skills, and engaging in age appropriate, open conversations are a few ways to build resilience and address some of the concerns related to warning signs of suicide. Incorporating these factors in home life is a key aspect in bolstering your family's mental wellness and can help you catch signs of mental health concerns and suicidal ideation early.

Healthy Habits

Creating healthy habits in your household is an important part of mental wellness. The best thing to do when it comes to suicide prevention is to be proactive. Some critical healthy habits include:

- Healthy and balanced eating
- Consistent sleep schedules
- Regular expectations with screen time and homework/chore routines
- Regular doctor and dentist visits

These healthy habits are a great way of setting positive norms in your home and they help with overall wellness. In addition, this will help you to understand how your children operate and in turn will help you to see the difference between your child's development and a mental health concern, which can be hard to determine.

Building Resilience

In addition to creating healthy habits, you can build resilience with use of mindfulness, coping skills, and problem-solving. Each of these will prepare your child to be able to respond to adversity and navigate difficult situations more easily. Incorporating these day-to-day in your home does not have to take much time and are shown to improve mental wellness. A few skills you can try with your children are:

- Identifying positives each day
- Breathing exercises
- Listening to calming music

Incorporating various skills such as these help with regular communication in your home, quality time with family, and opportunities to teach your children about working through things they are likely to encounter.



Social Supports

Another important consideration for building resilience and encouraging good mental wellness is to find, encourage, and develop social supports for your child. Family, friends, clubs, sports teams, and school staff can all be key social supports and provide your child with positive outlets when needed. Since each of these supports can significantly impact your child, making relationships with these supports can help you keep in the know when it comes to how your child is doing. Supports at your child's school are especially important considering the amount of time your child spends there. It may help to remind your child that they can talk to a school counselor or other staff at school if they need. It is also important to communicate with your child's teachers to ensure your child is getting the support they need and also to be aware of concerns present or progress made at school. Older children may look for these outlets on their own and want more independence, so set expectations around their time with friends to keep things positive.

Suicide Prevention Resources

Even with healthy habits, resiliency skills, and social supports, your child may experience a mental health concern or show warning signs of suicide. It is important to be aware of various resources you can use if something comes up. The following resources provide information that can help further understand suicide and what's out there to help:

<http://www.suicide.org/hotlines/arizona-suicide-hotlines.html>

<http://teenlifeline.org/>

<http://www.azspc.org/resources.html>

<https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>

<https://www.azahcccs.gov/BehavioralHealth/crisis.html>

<https://mhcd.org/language-matters-when-talking-about-suicide/>

<https://www.helpguide.org/articles/suicide-prevention/suicide-prevention.htm>

<https://www.sprc.org/populations/adolescents>

<https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/suicide-factsheet.pdf>

<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/suicide-prevention>

There are also various hotlines that can be used by anyone who is struggling. These can be shared with your child and you can have these on hand in case a crisis situation occurs:

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

Teen Lifeline phone or text: 602-248-TEEN (8336)

Maricopa County Crisis Line: 1-800-631-1314 or 602-222-9444

Touchstone's School Based Services program provides mental and behavioral health services in partnership with over 90 schools in the valley. If you are interested in learning more, go to

<https://touchstonehs.org/school-based-services/> or call member services at 602.618.9815.

If there is an immediate safety concern, call 911 or a crisis line right away.

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