

Suicide ranks as the third leading cause of death among young people ages 15 - 24 years old nationally and is the fourth leading cause of death for children ages 10 - 14. These statistics run even higher among college age students, where suicide is the second leading cause of death. In a number of states, suicides among young people ages 15-19 equal the rate among college students.

This publication is designed to provide you insight into the problem of suicide among youth in Mississippi and to equip you with knowledge that may help prevent a young person from taking his or her life.

Sobering Suicide Facts

- 15% of students in grades 9-12 reported in a 2007 national survey that they had seriously contemplated suicide, with 11% following through with a plan to do so.
- Males represented 83% of deaths in reported suicides for youth 10-24 years old.
- 81 Mississippi children between the ages of 15 and 19 died in 2005 due to accidents, homicide and suicide (*Kids Count 2008*).
- A 2004 report by the Violent Death Reporting System indicated that 73% of suicide victims also tested positive for at least one illegal substance (i.e., alcohol, cocaine, marijuana).

Disclaimer: *This brochure provides information that may be useful in identifying and intervening in potential incidences of suicide. It is intended for educational purposes only and is not a substitute for professional diagnosis and treatment of medical or psychiatric disorders. The user should keep in mind that people in a suicidal crisis, more often than not, need the services of professional mental health personnel. When in doubt, always refer a person to a professional for further evaluation.*

Where To Go For Help Or Information

Mississippi Department of Mental Health
 24 hours a day every day
 Toll-Free 1-877-210-8513
www.dmh.state.ms.us

What a Difference a Friend Makes
An Initiative sponsored by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)
www.whatadifference.org

Suicide Anonymous Talk Line
 601-713-4357

Contacto Linea de Crisis
 601-366-9298

National Suicide Hotlines
 Toll-Free / 24 hours / 7 days a week
 1-800-SUICIDE
 1-800-273-TALK
 1-800-273-8255
 TTY: 1-800-799-4TTY (4889)



Attorney General Jim Hood

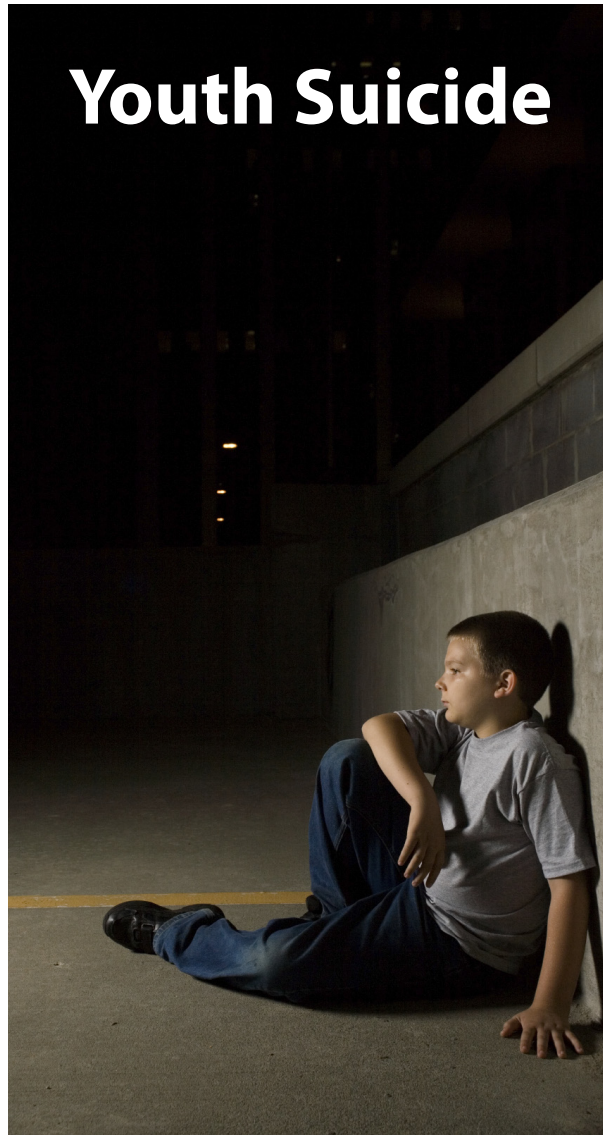


For comprehensive information about this and related topics, see the **GUIDE TO CHILD SAFETY: A Parent's PLAN**, a booklet published by the Mississippi Attorney General's Office. The publication is available online at www.agjimhood.com.

The Jason Foundation, Inc. (JFI)
Jackson (601) 936-2024
 Toll Free 1-877-778-2275
www.jasonfoundation.com

JFI at Alliance Health Center
 5000 Hwy. 39 North
 Meridian, MS 39301
 (601) 483-6211
www.alliancehealthcenter.com

JFI at Brentwood Behavioral Health Center of Mississippi
 3531 Lakeland Drive
 Flowood, MS 39232
 (601) 936-2024
 Toll Free: 1-877-778-2275
www.brentwoodjackson.com

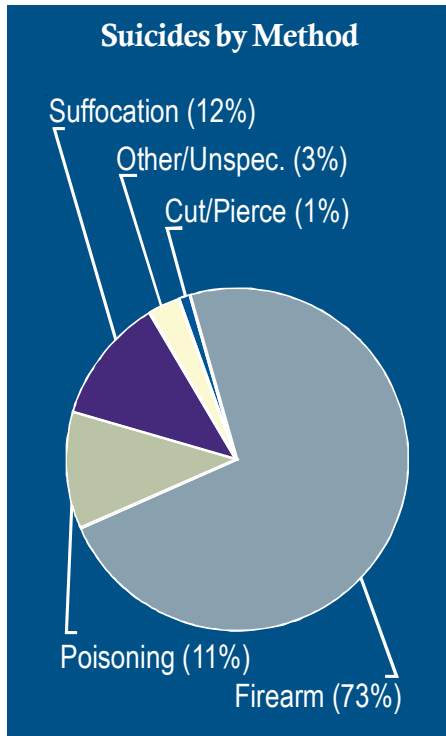


Youth Suicide

What Parents Should Know

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Youth Suicide



SOURCE: Suicide Prevention Resource Center Fact Sheet for Mississippi, 2000-2004

Among Mississippi youth 10-24 years old, 9% of all deaths result from suicide. Data on the problem suggest that high school students continue to be at significant risk for suicide. A 2007 survey of students in grades 9-12 at Mississippi high schools found that:

- 7.9% of students actually attempted suicide during the year prior to the survey, compared to 7% in a 2003 survey.
- As many as 10.6% of these Mississippi students went to the trouble of making a plan to commit suicide in 2007, versus 12% in 2003.
- 3% of youth attempting suicide in 2003 were treated for injury, poisoning or drug overdose compared to 2.6% in 2007.

Signs Youth May Be Considering Suicide

According to the experts, people considering suicide go through three stages. The challenge is in identifying how close an individual is to carrying out suicidal tendencies. At any stage, a person is not thinking clearly and needs professional counseling IMMEDIATELY.

Suicidal ideation - At this level, the person believes suicide is the only answer to his/her problems. He or she has no specific plan in place, but is weighing the various methods for ending his or her life.

Planning - A method of death has been decided, and the person is preparing to carry it out at this stage. The individual might be obtaining a weapon, making out a will, or writing farewell letters to be found after his/her death.

Action - The person is ready to end his/her life. Getting rid of prized possessions, giving money away, or exhibiting various other unusual acts of generosity are all signs of pending suicide. Individuals at this point are in imminent danger of committing suicide. The suicide method of choice is an important measure of the seriousness of the person's situation. The more lethal the method, the more serious the situation. The presence or lack of a support system, such as family and friends who can watch the person and see that they receive treatment, is also a consideration.

The Jason Foundation, Inc. — a national organization committed to building awareness about youth suicide — notes distinct behaviors that may indicate that a young person is thinking about suicide. The foundation's research is incorporated below, along with other expert advice:

- Talking about suicide. The more graphic the detail, the greater the risk. GET HELP IMMEDIATELY.
- Making statements about feeling helpless, hopeless, or worthless.

- A deepening depression.
- Preoccupation with death.
- Taking unnecessary risks or exhibiting self destructive behavior.
- Behaving abnormally.
- A loss of interest in the things once cherished.
- Visiting or calling people about whom the child cares deeply.
- Making arrangements; setting one's affairs in order.
- Use or increased use of drugs or alcohol.
- Giving away prized possessions.

What You Can Do

- Identify and get treatment for the following problems to help prevent teen suicide:
 - Mental and learning disorders
 - Substance abuse problems
 - Problems dealing with stress
 - Behavior problems (such as controlling aggressive and impulsive behavior)
- Watch and listen to your child.
- Pay attention to sudden changes in behavior that cause you concern.
- Be willing to seek professional help and guidance if you believe your child is extremely depressed or may be contemplating suicide.
- Talk openly and honestly with your child or your child's friends about your concerns.
- Be supportive in helping youth and young adults cope with their feelings.
- Ask the child directly if he or she has thoughts of suicide.
- If you suspect your child is thinking about harming himself or herself, get help immediately! Always take a suicide threat seriously. If children are talking about it, they have already thought about it. It is a cry for help. Again, GET HELP IMMEDIATELY!