

**In an emergency, dial 911. For more information call the National Suicide Hotline at 800-SUICIDE or the United Way Help Line at (210) 227-HELP.**

## Ways To Help Your Child

### Listen to your child.

Parents often struggle with finding the right thing to say to children who are feeling depressed or angry because sometimes they honestly may not want to hear what may be said. This becomes even harder as the child grows older and begins challenging the ways of the family. Most parents would rather avoid fighting and may not talk to the child or listen to what the child has to say. Though this is a natural response, it can be harmful to the family in the long run.

### Ask your child if he or she is thinking about suicide.

You will not cause suicide by talking about it. Asking shows that you care. If your child talks about death or mentions suicide, do not get mad or pass judgment. Reassure your child that you love him or her. Remind children that no matter how awful problems seem, they can be worked out, and you are willing to help.

### Remove or lock up lethal weapons in your home, such as guns, pills and poisons.

### Get professional help.

Help your child get treatment if he or she has clinical depression or problems with alcohol or drugs. If your child is especially grouchy, worried, withdrawn, sad, upset or badly behaved for two weeks or more, get an evaluation by a health care professional.

### Local Resources:

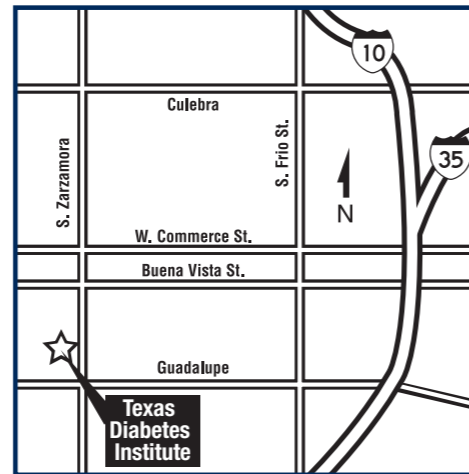
The Jason Foundation provides anytime access to a clinical specialist for youth, parents and teachers in the San Antonio area by calling the Community Assistance Resource Line (C.A.R.L.) at 1-877-778-CARL or visit [www.jasonfoundation.com](http://www.jasonfoundation.com).

## Registration Information

The seminar is on **Tuesday, September 13, 2005**, and is open to the public free of charge. Food and seating is on a first come, first served basis. To register or for additional information, phone KLRN, (210) 270-9000, and ask for Tara Sparks.

### Registration deadline is September 9.

This brochure is available at [www.healthcollaborative.net](http://www.healthcollaborative.net)  
Each participant will receive a resource list.



701 S. Zarzamora • San Antonio, TX 78207

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# Preventing Teen **Suicide:** What You Should Know



Presented by:



**THE YOUTH MENTAL  
HEALTH COUNCIL**  
of The Health Collaborative

Bexar County  
Suicide Prevention Coalition

# Preventing Teen Suicide: What You Should Know

## The Suicide Epidemic

Each year in the United States, thousands of teenagers commit suicide. According to the American Society of Pediatrics, the number of teen suicides nationwide has increased dramatically. Suicide is the third leading cause of death for 15 to 24-year olds nationally and in Texas, and the sixth leading cause of death for 5 to 14-year olds.

Teenagers experience strong feelings of stress, confusion, self-doubt, pressure to succeed, financial uncertainty and other fears while growing up. For some teens who believe they can no longer cope with their problems, suicide may appear to be the only way out.

Depression and suicidal feelings are treatable mental disorders. Although it is not possible to prevent every suicide, it is possible to recognize changes in behavior and risk factors that may lead to suicidal behavior. This seminar will help parents, professionals and volunteers who work with teens recognize the warning signs for suicidal behavior and provide local resources for help.

Latino youths have the highest rate of suicide, yet they are less likely to be identified by caregivers as having problems—*Report on the Surgeon General's Conference on Children's Mental Health 2000*

## Who Should Attend

- Parents
- Teacher & counselors
- Health care and mental health care professionals
- Nurses
- Social workers
- Police
- Clergy
- Adults who work with youth through church groups, athletic teams, Boy Scout and Girl Scout troops, and other youth organizations and programs
- Concerned youth and young adults

## What You Will Learn

- Understanding the warning signs of suicidal behavior
- How to differentiate between normal teen behavior and suicidal feelings
- How to talk to teens who are exhibiting suicidal feelings
- Information on medications
- A resource list with local sources for help

## Schedule

**Tuesday, September 13**  
Texas Diabetes Institute  
701 S. Zarzamora  
5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

▶ **5:30 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.**

Light dinner will be served.  
Texas Diabetes Institute Auditorium

▶ **6:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.**

Program  
Texas Diabetes Institute Auditorium

Screening of a clip from *"The Silent Epidemic,"* a documentary that explores teen suicide.

### Panel Discussion

Judge Lori Massey  
*288<sup>th</sup> District Court, Moderator*

### Panelists:

Karola White, MD  
*Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist,  
Methodist Specialty and Transplant Hospital*

Tom Martin, MD  
*Board Certified Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist,  
Southwest Mental Health Center, and  
Associate Faculty at UT Health Science Center*

Dennis Mergele, MA, LPC  
*Guidance Coordinator, Northeast Independent School District*

Gerald Juhnke, PhD  
*Director, Doctoral Program,  
Counselor Education and Supervision, UTSA*

### Question and Answer Session

**On Wednesday, September 21, at 8:00 p.m.** KLRN will air *"The Silent Epidemic."* A panel of local mental health care professionals will staff a call-in effort during the airing to answer questions from viewers. **For more information, visit the KLRN Web site, [www.klrn.org](http://www.klrn.org).**

### Presented by:

KLRN  
The Youth Mental Health Council  
of The Health Collaborative  
Bexar County  
Suicide Prevention Coalition

## Why Youth Suicide Rates Have Increased

- Easier to get the tools for suicide
- Pressures of life are greater
- Unrealistic expectations
- Increased drug and alcohol use
- Lack of parental interest

## Risk Factors

- Depression
- Anxiety disorders
- Alcohol or drug abuse
- History of disruptive behavior
- Recent episodes of trouble at school or with police
- Relationship problems
- Lack of communication with parents
- History of suicide of loved one or close friend

## Symptoms of Suicidal Feelings

### In the classroom

- Marked decline in school performance
- Skipping classes and opting out of school activities
- Poor concentration, sleepiness and inattentiveness
- Unusually disruptive or rebellious behavior
- Death or suicide themes dominating creative work
- Loss of interest in previously pleasurable activities
- Withdrawal from friends and social involvements

### In the home

- Change in eating and sleeping habits
- Apathy about dress and appearance
- Sudden and striking personality changes
- Loss of sense of humor or sudden compulsive behavior
- Sudden happiness after a prolonged period of depression
- Self-mutilation behaviors
- Withdrawal from family
- Feelings of worthlessness or inappropriate guilt
- Giving away prized possessions or throwing away important belongings

