

Mental Health and Suicide Prevention

There has been considerable momentum and discussion happening in Brown County regarding identification of strategies to effectively meet the mental health needs of our kids including suicide prevention. This requires collaboration with community providers, schools, and most importantly, parents. Parents can start with learning the FACTs or warning signs of suicide.

Feelings

- ◆ Hopelessness
- ◆ Rage, uncontrolled anger, seeking revenge
- ◆ Feeling trapped – like there's no way out
- ◆ No sense of purpose in life

Actions

- ◆ Acting reckless or engaging in risky activities
- ◆ Withdrawing from friends, family and society
- ◆ Increased alcohol or drug use
- ◆ Giving away prized possessions

Changes

- ◆ Decline in quality of school work
- ◆ Dramatic mood changes
- ◆ Anxiety, agitation, change of eating/sleeping habits

Threats

- ◆ Threatening/talking about hurting self

If you are concerned about your son/daughter, a great place to start is by letting them know your concerns. Here are some things to consider prior to starting the conversation:

- ◆ Timing is everything! Pick a time when you have the best chance of getting your child's attention (ex. a car ride).
- ◆ Think about what you want to say ahead of time. It helps to have a reference point such as recent events in the news that may relate.
- ◆ Ask your child's response. Be direct. (Examples may include: "What do you think about suicide? "Is it something you or your friends talk about it? Have you ever thought of suicide?)
- ◆ If you hear something that
- ◆ If you hear something that worries you, be honest. "What you're telling me has me concerned, let's talk more about this".

You are not alone in addressing these concerns! Please reach out to student service personnel in your child's school or the Crisis Center at 436-8888.