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# **Your Mental Health: From Finding A Therapist to Obtaining Treatment**

## **Topics Covered:**

Mental Illness Self-Diagnosis: Heal Thyself or Seek Help

Therapy 101: How to Choose a Therapist

Questions to Ask Mental Health Experts

Group Therapy

Dealing with a Mental Illness Diagnosis

Going Mad or Just Mentally Ill?

Red Flag Indicators of Mental Illness

Medicines in Mental Health

Ten Classic Warning Signs of Suicidal Behavior

Turning Around the Hopelessness in Teen Suicides

# **Your Mental Health: From Finding A Therapist to Obtaining Treatment**

## **Mental Illness Self-Diagnosis: Heal Thyself or Seek Help**

When it comes to your mental health, can you tell the difference between a problem that can be alleviated simply by consulting a few self-help books, and one that requires professional attention? We are a culture awash in information, and today there is more information created for mass public consumption than ever before. In many ways, this age is more enlightened than ever before. We are beginning to remove much of stigma that was once attached to mental health issues, and opening ourselves to the possibility of leading happier, healthier lives.

With so much information at our ready disposal, it can be tempting to attempt to 'cure' ourselves, no matter what type of mental health issue we face. But when is it time to visit a professional? Here are a few guidelines on when you should seek professional help, and what type of self-help tools you should choose to best heal yourself.

## **When to Seek Help from a Professional Mental Health Physician**

If you suspect that you or a loved one suffer from any of the following disorders, or observe any of the following symptoms, you should seek medical and psychological help as soon as possible:

- Schizophrenia
- Severe depression or grief
- Severe anxiety
- Trauma caused by a stressful event
- Severe mood swings/mood disorder
- Psychosis
- Lethargy and Daytime Fatigue
- Chronic Insomnia or Oversleeping
- Paranoia
- Suicidal thoughts or tendencies
- Inability to function normally
- Inability to find pleasure in things that used to be pleasurable

All of these symptoms can indicate a serious mental disorder. Reading self-help books or using alternative therapies will most likely not be effective for treating serious mental disorders.

## **Helping Yourself: Practicing Good Mental Fitness and Stress Management**

If you find yourself occasionally overwhelmed by work responsibilities, family duties, and social obligations, you are not alone. Everyone, even the most laidback among us, can benefit from practicing good mental fitness and stress management.

Good mental fitness means you are making the conscious decision to cultivate a stable and content state of mind that can help you cope when stress strikes. These self-help techniques, when practiced on a daily basis, can help you overcome the daily stress that your mind and body are exposed to daily.

- Practice the art of daydreaming. Perhaps you were scolded as a child for having your head 'in the clouds.' You may be surprised to learn that many mental health professionals recommend a period of extended contemplation and daydreaming to many of their patients. Daydreaming is a relaxing act, one in which our mind roams free, unobstructed by negative thinking or anxious thoughts.

- Keep a journal. Journaling is a proven self-help therapy for releasing stress and tension. Writing down what you feel and think can be remarkably self-actualizing, and even fun!

- Keep a regular exercise regime. Even if it means simply taking a walk around the block with a neighbor, moving your body is one of the best ways to heal your mind.

- Call up an old friend. Don't be afraid to confide your troubles with a close acquaintance. Freud called it the "talking cure." Articulating your worries and problems can often diffuse the intensity of the stress.

### **The Wide World of Self-Help Books**

Perhaps the most important development of the modern self-help phenomenon is the glut of self-help books available to us today. Are you depressed? Going through a divorce? Suffering from severe anxiety? Not able to get a good night's rest? Whatever your troubles, you can be sure someone has written a book addressed specifically to your problem.

The most prescient concern is choosing a good self-help book that can actually be beneficial to you. Make sure the author of the book you choose is well qualified to address the subject you are interested in. Are they endorsed by a well-known organization? What kind of critical attention did the book receive? More importantly, if you find a good self-help book, it's not enough to purchase the book and read it. As obvious as it may sound, you should make a conscious effort to follow the advice in the book to gain real results.

### **Therapy 101: How to Choose a Therapist**

Getting a recommendation from a close family member or friend is probably the best way to obtain a therapist. Not unlike medical doctors all therapists have a particular field in which they specialize. Some may be good at one field and not at another, so matching the right doctor with the best patient is very important. Many times your general practitioner will refer you to a good therapist.

They would know who has a specialty on the field you may need. Many times people check online or go through their local telephone books to look for a reputable therapist. When dealing with an insurance company, more than likely they will set you up for an appointment to see a

group of three panelists, who will review your case and direct you to a couple of well known doctors whom can treat your situation.

They will generally have a brief interview with the therapist to see if they are right to treat your case. It is very important for them to set you up with a doctor that you will be at ease with and not feel uncomfortable speaking with. Furthermore many doctors will now set up a small interview as a getting to know you basis so you can feel them out and they can get a good read on your demeanor with them.

When you see a therapist you leave yourself open to perhaps a lot of criticism and can place yourself in a vulnerable situation. They will assure you that it is all part of the healing process so it would be necessary for you to open up and allow them the chance to help you. It is imperative though that you want the help in the first place.

Trust is the biggest issue between the patient and the therapist, and must be maintained at all times, in order for it to work out. This must be the safe place for the patient. Having this safe place is the single most important place for the patient as they will be bearing all and feel alone and practically helpless.

The emotional and physical environment must be a steady balance and be a warm and inviting home base for the therapy to be successful. Having everything in a calm state and relaxed the patient is more likely to open up and find that inner problem that must be eliminated through help of the therapist. This will be a support group of one and will allow the patient to, not feel obligated to open up because someone else has, it is only the two of you in the room.

The therapist will not ridicule you or put you down, as they are there to be a friend, and a trusted ear. You will always have dignity and self worth when it comes to the therapist. This person that you will not really know is going to hear the most personal and possibly embarrassing things about you, they are not there to judge or make assumption, they are there to help.

When you make the initial call more than likely you will not speak to the therapist, do not get discouraged as they are usually quite busy, instead make sure you leave your name and that you want to see a therapist, then leave your phone number, if you do not feel comfortable with leaving your home number leave a cell phone number instead.

Speaking with someone about your problem other than a trained and professional therapist may be detrimental to your condition or problem, it would be best to wait until you speak to this professional and keep it in strict confidence, as there is such thing as patient therapist confidentiality. It is best that you do not leave a detailed message with the secretary as she is not a doctor and really has no business knowing why you wish to speak to the doctor. If they insist that you tell them, they should be reported.

Wait for the doctor, as chances are they will get back to you within a few days anyway, if not that very same day. When you receive the call back they will identify themselves as the therapist, tell them that you are looking for an appointment.

Do not speak about your situation on the telephone, as you never really know whom you are speaking with. In short, the therapist will see you and with all the training that they have received and the willingness to fix the problem within yourself, you will be fast on the road to recovery. Good luck.

### **Questions to Ask Mental Health Experts**

If you or someone you love visits a therapist, there are questions you need to ask to avoid problems. Some therapists are more advanced than others are, and after 24 of walking in and out the door of mental health offices, I can tell you that some are not qualified to diagnose anything that is not common. If you suspect you have a disorder, the best thing you can do is get accuracy on those symptoms, research your behaviors, and write them down.

If you go to the therapist you will be ahead of the game, and by learning more about your own behaviors, symptoms, and so forth can save you from a diagnose you may or may not have. Therapists as a general rule base their diagnosis on the thought patterns, which includes hearing and talking.

If the patient shows a disturbance in their thinking patterns, the therapist will consider psychosis, since this is a symptom related to the diagnosis. Therapists will search for signs that the patient may demonstrate, including vague thoughts, fleeting ideas, peripheral thought patterns, blocking thoughts, disassociation and so forth. Counselors often search for evidence of schizophrenia or psychosis when there is a break in reality, paranoia and so forth.

Paranoid and Paranoia are separate from the other, and must not be misconstrued. Professionals could make a mistake in diagnosis if they are not aware of the difference of paranoia and paranoid. Schizophrenias are often paranoid, while patients that suffer posttraumatic stress in the early stages may illustrate paranoia.

When a patient answers out of context, or else the ideas delivered are unrelated to the conversation then there is a potential mental illness. For example, we are discussing society, and the patient says, "I never go there. After I get back from Canada next week we can do that." And so on. Another area of concern is when the patient is talking fragments, rather than delivering a complete sentence.

Usually the patient will start with one idea and jump repeatedly to several other ideas. This pattern is known as fleeting thought processing. When the patient is illustrating thoughts that are sidetracked, the therapist may show a degree of concern. Stop here. Language is important when evaluating a patient, since some patients may not have sufficient skills in communication it could very well mean a lack of education rather than a diagnosis.

If you are visiting a therapist, or have taking another individual to a therapist, and this is the only symptom, make sure that the patient is not inappropriately diagnosed and placed on medications he or she may not need. It is important to pay attention to symptoms and signs that link mental health.

Be sure to ask the therapist questions any time there is a diagnosis. Never accept the diagnose without learning more about it, what the symptoms include, and what medicines can do to treat the disorder. When a person is suddenly, loose a train of thought during a session this may be a possible diagnosis.

For example, if a person is telling you about a dream related to his or her parent, and all of a sudden claims they cannot remember what they were talking about, this is an evident sign of disorder. Most likely, this patient has suffered trauma. The symptoms are in front of you and it is important to continue treatment to find which diagnosis the patient may have. Unfortunately, most therapists are not trained to treat patients with Multiple Personality Disorders, and often these people pay a steep price for negligence and ignorance.

The sign or symptom is known as disassociation or blocking memories and this is a definite sign or Multiple Personality Disorder. It is important to examine the patient however closely, since dementia and other types of disorders may cause slight disassociation. Multiple Personality Disorder is often exclusive in blocking memories to avoid pain.

Therapists are constantly studying the mind and often use the guinea pig method until they figure out what the problem is. It is always wise to ask questions when you are visiting any therapists since many make mistakes and your mental health or someone else's mental health is important and should not be taking lightly.

## **Group Therapy**

Group therapy has proven to be effective in mental health. While some counselor will start out with one on one therapy, they may finally refer the patient to group sessions. Many services and support groups available offer help to those with mental health problems. Group therapy allows the patients to freely discuss their issues, problems, and even find social influences that share the same symptoms or similar symptoms. When two or more people are together and can relate to each other, this is often more effective than one on one sessions.

Group therapy sessions allow the patients to meet once or twice each week, meeting many others that share common illnesses, thus promoting association. If a person is suffering and has difficult to meet in public places, or even go grocery shopping this is a great source for healing. Some people with mental illnesses often avoid socializing simply because they feel that other people do not understand and it is embarrassing for them to go in public when they are at risk of erupting from their diagnosis.

Triggers are often what cause a mental ill individual to suffer interruptions, and many times people care less about what may trigger another individual. It is important to get help when you have a mental illness, yet it is also important to work through the problems on your own if possible. If you use self-talk strategies, it can help with your mental health issues. Another great form of therapy is writing your problems on paper.

This is great since if you put all the details of your interruptions on paper your counselor can help you find out the cause and work toward a resolve. Other great strategy for dealing with

mental health is to avoid isolation. This is where group therapy comes in to play. Since you are around others, you will be able to communicate. Communication is an excellent source for healing. Another great source for healing is education.

If you are in a group therapy session, you are teaching more about your disability as well as learning about how others suffer similar symptoms as yourself. This prevents you from feeling alone. Group therapy is also great since it gives you the ability to get out of the house. Think of it as an activity or a social entertaining experience. The entertainment will be seen once you sit down, relax and start sharing your problems with others. Most people when you tell them I am suffering from my diagnosis, symptoms including the inability to concentrate; most people will say, "oh, I understand this. I too have difficulties concentrating."

Well, what do you do to make matters better? You may ask. The other person may tell you what he or she does to work toward concentrating, and you may see somewhere in the conversation a strategy that can work for you. It becomes entertainment since you found a source of happiness within.

Group therapy is great for many individuals, but there are some disorders where group therapy should be avoided at all costs. Although counselors have set up group meetings for such disabilities, it often proves troublesome rather than helpful. One example is MPD patients, or Multiple Personality Disorder. These patients are very distinct and have triggers that interrupt the diagnosis more so than other types of mental illnesses.

Mental illness is tricky and often difficult to understand, but in most all cases, there is a solution to dealing with the diagnoses. It is important to pay close attention if you are joining a group session. When you pay attention, you receive the benefits of hearing all about others and how they suffer too. You also get the benefit of possibly learning something about yourself. When you learn who you are, you are growing to development, which is the element required for better mental health.

Finally, many that suffer mental illnesses often lack development. There was something in their lifetime that was not provided to them to help them grow. If a person is now growing in accordance to human standards, then that person often jumps track somewhere along the way. Mental health and group sessions then, is a great solution for growing.

## **Dealing with a Mental Illness Diagnosis**

Dealing with family, neighbors, friends, and employers can often be hard and embarrassing and just as hard as dealing with the diagnosis itself. If you had to be hospitalized or did some embarrassing things prior to getting diagnosed and treated it can feel worse. You are probably shocked by the whole thought of having an illness. A horde of emotions could be plaguing you at this time like confusion, sadness, anxiety, and even fear.

This is not uncommon and can take some time to get used to. In the past there have been a lot of negative feelings towards mental illness, most of them unfounded and wrong to say the least. There have been many findings in the last few decades and realizing that mental illness is just

like any other illness. The only difference is that it affects the brain. Since the brain controls the rest of the body it isn't any wonder why people have so many side effects. The person who has this type of illness did not ask for it or caused it. Just like diabetes, these things happen.

What exactly causes mental illness is still not completely known and understood. It does affect the brain and can cause a range of psychological symptoms and requires treatment. There are many safe and effective medications out today on the market that can control and regulate people with these diseases.

Therapy can also help for management and when in crisis. Each person is different and a mental illness can affect people differently. So everybody's recovery rate is different and what each person responds to best for treatment is different too. It is important to not blame yourself and realize you may not recover over night and that is okay. Accept what you are feeling and know it is valid. Don't be afraid to ask for help if you need too, it is better to deal with the emotions now then hold them in. have a good support team. This can be your doctors, a therapist, family, friends, or anyone else you can talk to and get help from when needed.

The first feeling you might be feeling is grieving or guilt. This is normal and you need to talk about this with someone who can listen. This is not your fault and you did nothing to deserve to be sick. Don't be afraid to get support. If you aren't comfortable talking with friends or family consider joining a support group of people with the same mental illness as you. You can see how other have let go and accepted their diagnosis.

They can give you hope to a good life and full recovery and what you need to do to get there. There are several steps to acceptance and you shouldn't have to go through it alone. You must grieve and go through the stages of loss in order to truly move on. Most people go through denial first.

They believe after their medication has kicked in and they are feeling better that they are cured and don't need the medication anymore. This is not the case as many people find out after they have relapsed when they stopped their medicine. After this, anger will probably be the next step, followed by the emotions of bargaining, depression, and then finally acceptance.

Finding ways to cope and deal with your illness, feelings and concerns is important. Don't be afraid to call your doctor if your medications make you feel strange or need someone to talk to. They should be there to support you and should never blame you or ridicule you. You always have the right to make choices and be informed about your illness and options to make the best decision for you. Make sure you have a caring and active psychiatrist.

This person should be willing to do what ever it takes to help you get and stay well. He or she should be able to tell you about groups, therapies, and all the medication options you have. They should tell where to get support for dealing with your illness and what to expect during recovery.

Getting help with understanding your illness and coming to terms with "why me" can make the world of difference in your recovery time and how well you stay in the future. You may not be able to change your diagnosis but with the right help and resources you can live and have a normal healthy life with it.

## **Going Mad or Just Mentally Ill?**

There is no known exact reason why some people develop mental illnesses while others don't or how they come to be. There are so many symptoms that one could have that could be considered normal or a possible illness, it can be hard to tell. Trying to tell if you are just stressed out, having a bad day or month, have an underlying physical illness, or if you have a mental illness cannot be easy sometimes.

You must have many and multiple specific feeling and behaviors over a long period of time to be considered mentally ill. You must meet the criteria laid out by a psychiatrist. Some people who have all the symptoms come to find out they are only borderline in their illness and don't need medication and major intervention. Most of these people can be treated with behavioral therapy and stress reduction. Some behaviors that can arise can signify whether or not you have a particular disorder or not. You will have to have a minimum number to be considered mentally ill. Some are:

- Extreme sadness that won't go away, anger and/or irritability
- Eating changes such as eating more or less than usual
- Sleeping problems or changes
- Fatigue that is new
- Difficulty concentrating and making decisions
- Feeling guilty, worthless, or no good
- Physical ailments that don't seem to have a physical cause
- Inability to find enjoyment
- Abusing drugs and/or alcohol
- Thinking about dying and hurting or killing yourself
- Feeling extremely happy and energetic for no reason
- Feeling extremely powerful, very confident, and like you can do anything
- Need less sleep than normal
- Too many projects on at one time
- Quick fuse, angry, and aggressive
- Racing thoughts that won't go away
- Incessant talking
- Restless and jumpy
- Making rash and hasty decisions
- Trouble focusing and bouncing from topic to topic, or thought to thought
- Impulsive behavior like having unprotected sex, spending lots of money, and driving fast
- Thinking that people are out to get you
- Hallucinations, hearing and/or seeing things that is not there

More than five of the above may indicate a mental illness or borderline syndrome. If you or someone you know has a mental illness it does not mean you are nuts, crazy, a bad person or mad. It means that you have a sickness that needs to be treated like any other illness does. Never try to diagnose yourself, always see your doctor to make sure that there isn't something else going on. Only a trained professional can tell you if you have a mental illness. Seeing your doctor will let you know if this was just a fleeting moment or if there truly is an emotional and behavior issue and underlying mental illness.

We all have things happen in our life that might cause a temporary over exaggerated surge of emotions such as the death of a loved one, getting a raise or new job, getting married or having a child. These things will not affect your activities of daily living by causing long term depression, sleep disturbances, or over excitability. If you ever are thinking about suicide or that you might hurt your self or others call your local emergency number or crisis hot line. Get to the hospital or doctors as soon as you can.

The best thing you can do if you suspect that you have a mental illness is to see your doctor immediately early diagnosis is the key. You can talk to any health care professional they are trained to see the major warning signs of a metal illness and can help you get where you need to be and get the treatment that is best for you. Another warning sign is when friends and loved ones are telling you that you have changed or many of your normal behaviors have.

It is always better to go to the doctor rather than have the symptoms worsen and possibly get out of control. He or she will do a thorough physical exam to make sure there is no physical illness such as a bacterial or viral infection or any other disease. You will also be asked to describe your life style habits and a series of other questions to help pinpoint what is going on.

### **Red Flag Indicators of Mental Illness**

Mental illness is a growing and more recognizable problem in the United States and in the world. There are several different types of mental illness, all with several different types of attributes attached to them. By knowing the mental illness that you are dealing with and seeing what indicators are attached to them, you can become healthier and move away from the illness.

Mental illness is not anything that can be defined by itself, but rather, through a series of symptoms that are part of the illness. These different attributes will affect both internal and external environments in one's life. By indicating the different signs in relation to the mental illness, it will become easier to get this diagnosed. From here, you can get treatment from a therapist or by medications. Before you get help, however, you must recognize the different signs that are part of it.

Mental illness is a condition that stops someone from being able to think normally or behave at a normal level. There are often times several symptoms that are linked to the mental illnesses. Most of these symptoms will last for a longer amount of time. Mental illness takes place through several different kinds of relations to the body. This includes a relation to the physical. It also includes thought behaviors as well as patterns that may take place in emotions.

One of the signs to look for with mental illness is withdrawal. You may find that you, or someone you know, are moving away from groups, family, friends or loved ones; it might be a sign of a type of mental illness. One of the things that you may find is that you do not want to participate in social activities like you usually do. When friends begin to disappear and when you find that you do not want to be around your family or those that are considered significant others, it may be a sign of a mental illness.

Changes in levels of concentration might also be a part of the mental illness. A lack of focus or the inability to hold other different levels of concentration might occur. This may affect your work area, school or conversations with those that you know. Several will find that concentration is lost in several different areas of life, making it difficult to function at a normal energy level.

Sleeping is one of the signs that are often related to mental illness. This can take shape in two forms. One of these may include you not being able to sleep. Hyperactivity and restlessness are often associated with this as well. At the other extreme, you may want to sleep consistently, and always have a tired feeling. Feeling like you don't want to participate in regular activities, or don't have the regular energy to participate in what you used to may be part of the mental illness.

Weight change is another physical sign that may be related to depression. Overeating is one of the signs in relation to this. One may also have a loss in appetite, causing them to loose weight at a rapid pace in an unhealthy manner. Weight loss or gain can take place in several different types of mental illness for several different types of reasons.

Mood swings and emotional changes are another part of mental illness. One may find that they become agitated or worried easily. There also may be several times that are filled with sadness and hopelessness. Mood swings can also move another way and cause anger to become more prominent without control.

Delusions, though not common in all types of mental illnesses, can often occur as well. Depending on the type of mental illness that is taking place, one may begin to hallucinate about certain things or become delusional about the people and places that are surrounding them.

Anything that is drastically changed in relation to practices, habits, thinking, emotions and moods may be part of a mental illness. While there are several unique and dominant factors in the different types of mental illnesses, they are all triggered by a sudden change in internal thinking. By understanding these different factors, it will become easier for you to help yourself or someone else in overcoming their illness.

## **Medicines in Mental Health**

You walk into a moderately business office sit down a chair in a well-dressed lobby and wait for your name to be announced. Finally, it comes and you are assessed by an intake worker, finally sent to a therapist a week later, and then recommended to the staff psychiatrist. In this short time, you were diagnosed with Bipolar, Depression, which is an element of bipolar, and posttraumatic stress disorder. You also have a history of Diabetes, High-Blood Pressure, and Allergies.

Now the doctor is not aware of the inflammatory fiber nerve disease underlying the symptoms. You continue to visit the mental health experts complaining constantly of your symptoms, and they begin treating you like a Hypochondriasis. (Someone occupied with health issues and most times are exaggerated--you begin feeling confused, disappointed with the therapist, and decide

to go to see a physician that finds a fiber nerve disease, which proves that your complaints are valid.

However, you were already given prescriptions for psychotic and depressive symptoms. You begin taking the medications and suddenly your insurance policy stops payment on the drug Effexor XR. Suddenly, you explode feeling aggressive, wanting to kill, wanting to die, wanting to harm and there is no explanation since these feelings have never occurred to this magnitude before you took the antidepressants prescribed.

Now the problem has increased and you are searching desperately for an answer, yet you find nothing. What went wrong you might ask? Well, Effexor XR is given to patients with depression and bipolar symptoms. Since Effexor is said to target the brain chemicals increasing the Norepinephrine and Serotonin in the brain, it is claimed to eliminate symptoms of depression and bipolar. Now Effexor XR is notorious (once the medication is stopped abruptly) for increasing behaviors including, suicidal thinking, impulsive behaviors, violent outburst and so forth.

The Prescription has caused increases in blood, making it a bad deal for patients with High-Blood Pressure. Now you went to the therapist to fix a problem and your problems have increased dramatically as it is all because of health care, mental health, medical, and so on. You start feeling that it cannot get any worse, but the doctors continue increasing your medicines prescribing Tenormin (Atenolol) for your pain and after prescribing numerous doses of inflammatory prescriptions, which lead to stomach disorders, you are now taking meds to control your stomach.

Moreover, it does not stop here. Next, you are given Imipramine HCL for pain, Tramadol for pain, and rotated between antidepressants finally prescribed Effexor XR again. If you are feeling alone you are not, since many times doctors, mental experts, and health care providers make this mistake excessively many times to count. It is ludicrous to go to mental health experts all to find severe complications exploding your life and you are the one to blame, when in reality these experts made a serious mistake.

Since the mental health expert obviously had no choice but to eliminate Hypochondriasis, and claim that they were only searching for answers to the problem (making excuses) you finally say I am searching for another mental health expert, since you have no idea what you are doing. You go to the next office; sit, wait, and when you are called you talk to an intake worker, then a therapist, and finally a psychiatrist.

You go through the same procedures wondering if these experts are smarter than the other experts you just left, and soon find yourself on Effexor XR, Imipramine HCL, Tramadol, and a variety of other medications. I told you people what happens before you tell the experts, yet they ignore your cries and tell you to take your medications as prescribed. Are we fixing problems or are we adding to the many problems we face every day.

Some mental diagnoses were later proven a medical problem or central nervous system interruption that created a series of symptoms delusional to mental health experts, believing that the patient was mentally ill. Caught in a web of testing and despair we often fight to find a reason that our minds are tricking us into acting out of accordance to the so-called normal. The solution is right

in front of them in most cases, yet everyone is turning their heads and looking for another answer.

## **Ten Classic Warning Signs of Suicidal Behavior**

Suicide is one of the problems that are occurring in the world today. When one decides to commit suicide, they have decided that it is better to take their own life instead of to continue living. Before someone gets to this extent, you can look for warning signs of suicidal behavior. Here are ten classic warning signs to look for if you think that someone is going to commit suicide. If you see any of these signs, it is important to also talk to the person and find the right help before they carry through with killing themselves.

**1. Depression.** Before someone decides to commit suicide, they will usually be feeling several different emotions. These will include things like sadness, hopelessness, and anxiety. Depression will most often include a loss of interest in life and the things that are happening around someone. Major depression, when caught on time, can be treated through medication and therapy.

**2. Talking about dying.** Often times, those who are considering suicide will be thinking about different ways, which they can kill themselves. They will move into telling one different ways in which they can die. They may also be thinking of ways in which someone else killed themselves.

**3. Sleep patterns.** Those who are depressed and considering suicide may change their sleeping habits. This can range from them sleeping too much to not sleeping at all and being restless all of the time. Often times, one will move from a regular schedule to being hyperactive. They then may move into periods of sleeping for long periods of time.

**4. Concentration.** A loss in concentration at work or in school as well as in extra-curricular activities may also occur. If you notice that someone is not putting as much effort into different areas of life as usual, then it can be a sign that they are depressed.

**5. Eating habits.** Many times, those who are considering suicide will have a loss in appetite. If you aren't monitoring this part, be aware of sudden weight loss that may occur. At the same time, there may be some who will overeat as a result.

**6. Low self-esteem.** This is one of the major factors that play a part in one wanting to commit suicide. This will include feeling worthless and guilty. Hatred may also be a part of this, as they will seem to not like anyone.

**7. Lack of goals.** Those who are contemplating suicide will have a disinterest in the idea of the future and different goals that they want to reach. They will also seem to not care about the present actions that are happening around them in relation to the future.

**8. Making arrangements.** This may include several different things. Arranging for someone to take care of their animals or things is one sign of someone thinking about

committing suicide. They may also begin giving away the things that seem to be important to them. Several will make out wills as well in order to make sure that things are taken care of after they are gone.

**9. Loss of control.** This may include harming others, as well as harm towards them. This loss of control may also include outbursts of anger or sadness that happen without warning.

**10. History.** It is also important to look at the events that are surrounding one's life in relation to them wanting to commit suicide. This may include the loss of someone who they loved. It may also include a lost job, relationship, money, friends or religion. These losses and agitations are one thing to look for in relation to suicide. If they willingly stop attending things as well, it may be a sign that they are losing their interest in life.

By looking for the signs, you can help someone to not commit suicide. As soon as you think they have suicidal tendencies, it is important to find them help. By doing this, you will be giving them a chance to find their goals again and begin moving forward.

The most common way to recognize suicidal tendencies is through a change in mood, such as depressive qualities. However, there are also several other signs that one is suicidal. If you recognize any of these, it is best to approach someone about what they are thinking and try to redirect them towards a better life.

## **Turning Around the Hopelessness in Teen Suicides**

Suicide is among the top ten leading causes of death and has no regard for age, sex, or ethnic background. Suicide is among the top three causes of death among the young population of today's society. As difficult as those statistics are suicide is among the top five causes of death among the pre-teens. Suicide is nothing to laugh at any age but the thought of someone so young with so much to live for is even less appealing.

Teen suicide is getting worse every day all around the world. Many people ask why such youth would want to take their life for or what they possibly have to be stressed about. Many teens feel the pressure to be the best in grade, best in sports, and to be popular. These ideals can be very overwhelming and cause anxiety and stress.

There are the teens that have been severely abused and neglected and are now seriously depressed. Teens that figure out they are gay and have to deal with the rejection of family and friends are at high risk too. Then there are those teens that suffer from a mental illness that has not been treated.

Teenagers and pre-teens have a very rough time trying to adjust their life from children to growing adults and the world sometimes is not all that forgiving. Teens are sometimes hardest on themselves and there are those who cannot handle the struggle and this is not the time in their lives when they are communicating with their parents so it is very difficult to see when they are moving into a dangerous state of mind.

More than 50 percent of high school students have entertained the idea of suicide at one time or another. More than 5 percent admit to trying it at least once. This is a very real cry for help and should not ever be taken lightly especially if there is no communication in the home and your teenager does not have anywhere else they can go the next method of communicating to get someone's attention is through acting out.

It is very important to talk with your teenagers and also watch them to see how they are acting. Don't be afraid to ask them how they feel and let them know that you are there for them when and if they want to talk. Some signs to watch for:

- Personality changes
- Trouble with friends (girl or boyfriend)
- Becoming isolated and withdrawn
- Schoolwork quality changed
- Trouble concentrating
- Choosing behavior that is contrary to how they are normally
- If this is a daughter, is she pregnant?
- Have there been attempts to run away from home?
- Begin using drugs or alcohol
- Physical complaints
- Eating or sleeping patterns changed

If you remotely think your teenager may be considering harming themselves in any way, talk to them, talk to someone but do not stay silent. Many times your teenager will talk to someone else because they do not want to disappoint you. Make sure you know what is going on with your teen. Listen hard and don't judge them or get mad. Reassure them that no matter what you love them and want them to live.

Offer to get them help and stay with them through the crisis. If you need to call your local crisis hot line or emergency number and have your child placed in protective care so they can hurt themselves. What ever you do don't pretend it isn't happening this could be the difference between life and death for your child. There are many good programs and medications available that can be of benefit.

Early intervention and help can lead to a full recovery and happy life. Prove to your child or any child in your life that life is worth living. Tell them to not give up and help is coming. There is a brighter world out there and it has much to share. We as the adults need to be able to see the threats around us and help our teens survive these years of torment literally. Think about the future and don't let any teen become another statistic. Watch and listen to your children. It takes more than words to hear what really is going with them.

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