

Suicide & Depression Information Card

Mental Health Awareness Week 2007

Grief After Suicide Related Death

Grieving for a suicide related death is a different experience; it often seems like a more intense grieving. People may feel guilt, anger, blame, shame, confusion, relief, despair, betrayal, and abandonment. * Survivors may also feel shocked because it happens suddenly. * Disconnected from the deceased because they chose to die. * Consumed with finding meaning or reason for the suicide. * Responsibility for death.

Suicide is a difficult topic for many people and so stigma is often felt by survivors of suicide.

Survivors may feel they are being avoided or judged by people. * People may not acknowledge the death occurred.

Coping Strategies.

Acknowledge the death was a suicide. * Talk openly with friends and family so everyone can deal with the grief. * Visit the Counseling Center to speak with a counselor. * Seek out support groups to discuss your feelings with people going through the same situation. * Develop rituals to honor your loved ones.

You can learn more at www.survivorsofsuicide.com

Warning Signs That Someone Might Be Suicidal

Do you have a friend who has said or done these things?

- "Life isn't worth living."
- "I won't be around to deal with that."
- "I just can't deal with everything, life's too hard."
- "Nobody understands me; nobody feels the way I do."
- "People would be better off without me."
- Giving away possessions
- A statement on an online profile about death and/or giving up
- Depressed, sad or irritable mood; hopelessness or giving up
- Change in sleeping patterns (too much/ little) or energy levels
- Change in weight (gain or loss)
- Loss of interest or pleasure in usual activities
- Withdrawal from family and friends

What Can You Do To Help

Acknowledge: Realize it is a serious problem. Be willing to listen to them.

Care: Let your friend know you're concerned about them. Ask "are you feeling suicidal?" If they are suicidal they may be relieved to have someone ask, and if they are not they will know you asked because you care.

Treatment: Consult with a counselor at the Counseling Center (436-3368) or other mental health professional. Call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1-800-273-TALK (8255).

To learn more you can visit www.StopASuicide.org or www.ulifeline.org

The Difference Between Having the Blues, Being Depressed and Feeling Suicidal

The Blues

Once in a while we all go through an emotional slump which can be classified as "the blues". Whether a relative just passed away, you didn't do so well on an exam, or you woke up on the wrong side of the bed we've all gone through it.

If it's the blues, the symptoms only last for about a week or two and then we pull ourselves out of the rut. Some simple things to get rid of the blues are: get out of bed- when you're sad you just want to lay in bed all day but if you get up and follow your routine you'll start the day better. Turn on the lights-light helps your body function better so open the blinds or step outside. Move around- go for a walk or exercise you'll feel more alert and have some time to clear your head. Talk to someone- whether you get the issue off your chest or you talk about something you enjoy to get your mind off the issue. Seek out humor-sometimes laughter really is the best medicine.

Approximately 75% of college students reported having felt the blues at least once in the last 12 months*

Being Depressed

It is normal to sometimes feel down or sad but if the symptoms last longer than 2 weeks that may be a sign of something more serious than just the blues. Some warning signs include the interference with your everyday life such as ability to work, sleep, eat, and enjoy activities. Depression is not just a passing mood. Friends and family should be more patient because you can't just snap out of this. Professional assistance can help to cope with this condition and make you feel better. You can take an online assessment at <http://www.med.nyu.edu/psych/screens/odst.html>

About 50% of college students reported having been depressed at least once in the last 12 months*

Feeling Suicidal

Thoughts of death or suicide are signs of severe depression. If you feel like you can't cope any longer or that life is not worth living you need to seek professional help. Suicidal thoughts, actions, and behaviors always need to be taken seriously. Even if you feel like you are not at a suicidal point yet, reach out for help early because the number one cause of college students' suicides is untreated depression.

About 10% of college students reported having suicidal thoughts at least once in the last 12 months.*

*American College Health Association. American College Health Association - National College Health Assessment (ACHA-NCHA) Web Summary. Updated August 2007. Available at http://www.acha-ncha.org/data_highlights.html. 2007.