



Suicide: PFCS can help you heed the call for HELP

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In America, one person dies by suicide every 13 minutes. According to [SAMHSA](#), it is the 2nd leading cause of death for teens. The biggest risks include prior attempts, a current mood disorder, substance abuse, and access to means. Research also suggests that males are more likely to complete a suicide than females.

Putnam Family and Community Services (PFCS) provides services for people of all ages with a wide variety of needs. This includes teens and others who may feel depressed and suicidal. We provide crisis support and assessments for teens and children in immediate need of help, and ongoing therapy for those in need of more support. In therapy it is important to ask questions that others might want to shy away from like, “Do you want to kill yourself?” and “How would you do it?” These are critical questions to get the topic out in the open and possibly save a person’s life. For people under the age of 24, hanging is the most common form of suicide, followed by the use of firearms and overdosing. However the use of firearms leaves perhaps the least opportunity for intervention or rescue. Suicide is often an impulsive act, and teens are usually an impulsive group of people. Together, it means that finding ways to slow down a possibly lethal impulse is key.

This is why limiting access to means is critical. Intoxication increases the chances of impulsive behavior, so teaching and supporting abstinence from substance use is important. Firearms should always be locked and put away, as should medications and other potential hazards. Don’t assume that hiding pills, liquor or weapons is enough; parents are often surprised to learn that kids know where everything is kept. In the few extra minutes it may take to reach the means to harm or kill oneself, things could change. The phone could ring. A friend or family member could appear. A distraction could create a delay long enough to prevent the impulse from becoming action.

Most people who become suicidal will, when discussing their feelings, acknowledge that if the main stressors in their life were resolved, they would not feel suicidal. However, most feel suicidal because they do not see any hope of resolution. This is where PFCS and others can help. Talking a situation through with another person often yield thoughts, ideas, and new perspectives that had not occurred to the person before. Options are identified and despair is lessened. Staff at PFCS Mental Health Clinic use nationally recognized tools to help reveal thoughts and plans for suicide in adults as well as children. These include the CAMS model (Collaborative Assessment and Management of Suicidality) and the Columbia Suicide Rating Scale.

In addition to the individual, group, and family therapy available for children and adolescents in the Mental Health Clinic and the Substance Use and Prevention programs, Putnam Family and Community Services also offers community based services for adolescents and their families. They, as well as Prevention Educators, are also available to offer support and education in the schools, where so often depression and suicidality is discovered.

Warning Signs for Suicide

- Visible changes in behavior from what is normal or usual for that person, including increased irritability or hostility, or social withdrawal
- Trauma or stress that the person does not seem able to get past
- Talking about or threatening to hurt oneself
- Seeking means to hurt or kill oneself
- Talking about or writing about death, dying, or suicide
- Statements such as, "I will just end it all"
- Hopelessness, feeling trapped with no options
- Seeing no reason for living or purpose in life
- Being unable to sleep or sleeping all the time
- New or increased alcohol or drug use
- Acting reckless or doing risky things with no care for the outcome

If you recognize these symptoms in your teen or a loved one, you can contact Putnam Family & Community Services (PFCS) to engage services that will help them to deal with the issues driving these behaviors and avoid what may be a tragic event.

If someone you know is in immediate danger, ALWAYS call 911!

Putnam Family & Community Services is a private, not for profit agency located at 1808 Route Six, Carmel, NY. We can be reached at (845) 225-2700. Our hours are Monday –Thursday 8:30–8:30, Fridays 8:30–5:30, and Saturdays 8:30-2:30.

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How else can PFCS help.....

What if I'm not sure whether my teenager needs treatment?

Free screenings are available through our **RISE Program** (Recognize, Identify, Screen, and Engage). These screenings can identify social emotional issues that may be impacting an adolescents functioning. If services are needed a referral will be provided.

What if we tried therapy and that doesn't seem to be enough?

Children's Coordinated Services Initiative (CCSI) is a partnership of service providers that offer services which help children and adolescents live safely at home and avoid hospitalization or residential placement. There are different levels of services available based on the family's needs such as Supportive Case Management, Intensive Case Management, or Home and Community Based Waiver.

What else can I do for my teenager?

Teens can be a tough group to engage. The psychologist David Crenshaw calls them "fawns in gorilla suits". However, taking the time to talk, listen, and support what they feel is essential. Teens need to know that those around them believe them and believe *in* them, even (and especially) at a time in life when they may have difficulty believing in themselves. See past what annoys you and find something positive to say to your teen every day.

What if I need some support too?

Our **Family Connections Support Group** meets the first and third Thursday of the month from 6-7:30pm. Parents and caregivers of children and adolescents struggling with mental health or behavioral issues are welcomed to come share their stories and exchange resources. The group is free and childcare is available as needed. There are also **Family Peer Support Advocates** available to meet with parents and caregivers on an individual basis.

If you are interested in any of these services please call Christina McGuigan, Coordinator of Children's Services, at 845-225-2700 x235 or Iris for an intake appointment for therapy at x 102, or PFCSinc.org

Additional Resources for Help with Depression, Suicidality, and Other Mental Health Needs:

- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1-800-273-8255 (TALK)
- Putnam County Crisis Hotline 845-225-1222
- Mental Health Association in Putnam 845-278-7600 mhaputnam.org
 - Information, advocacy, training, support groups, community events
- Green Chimneys 845-279-2995 Hotline 845-279-2588 greenchimneys.org
 - Residential and day treatment services, after school and drop in programs, community events
- Arbor House Respite 845-278-4486 (via Green Chimneys)

- A place to stay for 12-17 year olds who are homeless, runaways, or need a short break from their home to avoid a crisis
- Putnam Hospital 845-279-5711
 - Emergency, inpatient, and psychiatric day programs
- Four Winds Hospital 1-800-528-6624
 - Emergency, inpatient, and psychiatric day programs for adults and children

Online resources

www.suicidology.org Information on warning signs, risk and protective factors

<http://training.sprc.org> Information and training on Counseling on Access to Lethal Means (CALM)