

Safeguarding Our Children

Information for Parents

Developed by the
Suicide Prevention
Committee of the
Wake County Public
School System



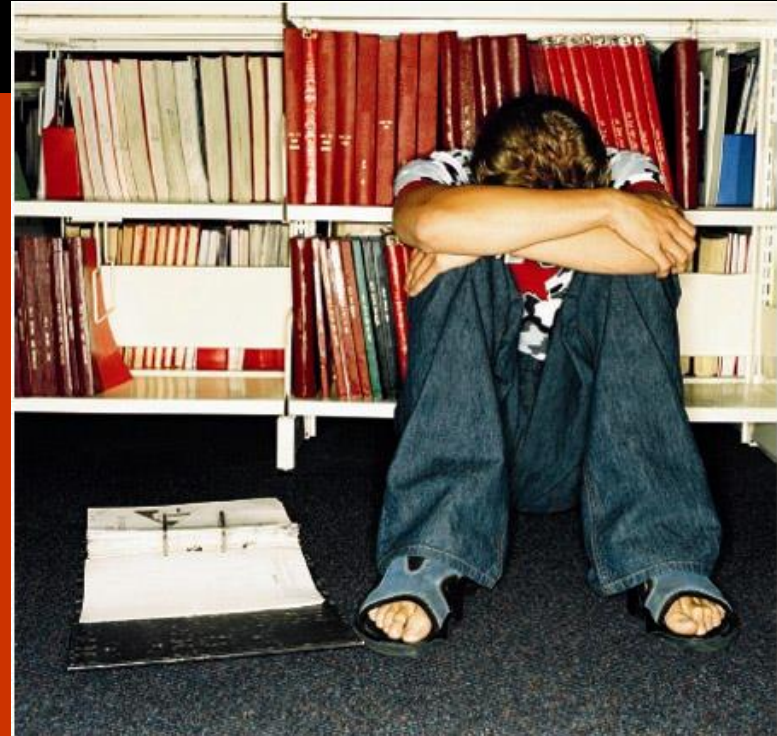
Partnership

Keeping children
safe is a shared
parent and
school
responsibility.



Still....

Many overlook
a serious threat
to safety and
well being.



Suicide

In 2001, the US Surgeon General declared suicide a serious public health problem.

Misconceptions

Most people think suicide is an adult problem

Each year school-age children die from self-inflicted injuries

Nationally, suicide is the third leading cause of death in the young.

Did you know.....?

Since 1995, an average of two WCPSS students have died by suicide annually.

Of these, some were middle school students.

Some people think that there is
nothing that can be done.

WRONG

**Suicide can be
prevented.**

Risk Factors

- Depression
- Significant loss
- Problems with peers
- Family history of mental or substance abuse disorder, suicide, and/or violence



Risk Factors

- Pressure to succeed in school, sports
- Exposure to suicidal behavior of others
- Aggressive or disruptive behaviors
- Firearm in home



Warning Signs

- Verbal or written threats
- Changes in personality
- Previous suicide attempts
- Sleep disturbances
- Changes in eating habits
- Drop in school performance
- Use of drugs or alcohol



Warning Signs

- Themes of suicide, death, or depression in artwork or essays
- Withdrawal from family, friends, or prior interests
- Giving away possessions
- Feelings of hopelessness or helplessness



Parents should:

- Take the threat seriously
- Listen and show support
- Communicate your concerns for his/her well being
- Talk openly and ask questions



Take action

**Make sure your son or daughter
is SCREENED or EVALUATED by
trained professionals.**

Whom to contact

- Personal physician
- Mental health professional
- School counselor
- School nurse
- School psychologist
- School social worker

Do Not Assume...

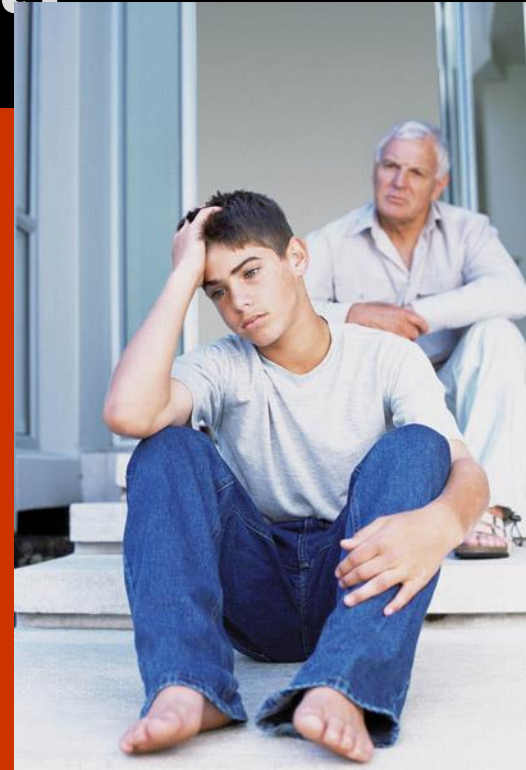
- That the feelings will simply go away
- That your son or daughter is only seeking attention
- That you are to blame for your child's difficulties

What if the School Contacts You?

- Stay calm
- Discuss concerns with school personnel – preferably in person
- Work with the school to create a plan for your child's safety
- Take care of yourself – this is stressful for parents

What Happens Next:

Your child may be referred for an outside evaluation.



What is WCPSS Doing to Help?

- Training staff
- Providing suicide prevention information to students
- Supplying informational student posters and brochures
- Informing parents of screening results
- Training clinicians

What is WCPSS Doing to Help?

- Developing an action plan for each student
- Providing parent awareness programs
- Offering suicide prevention information in PTA newsletters
- Screening at-risk students immediately

Resources for Families in Crisis

- National Suicide Hotline
1-800-SUICIDE
- HopeLine
919-231-4525
- Teen Education and Crisis Hotline
1-800-367-7287
- American Foundation of Suicide Prevention
www.afsp.org

