Dear Friend,

The tragedy of suicide is even more shocking and disturbing when a young person takes his or her own life. According to the National Institute of Mental Health, suicide is the second-leading cause of death in young people ages 10-34. In fact, more than twice as many people die each year by suicide than by homicide.

Sometimes we forget that adolescence is a time of great changes: physical, emotional and social. During this transitional period, teens and young adults can sometimes feel overwhelmed.

This brochure helps address the problem of teen suicide. It also includes information on drug and alcohol abuse and bullying, which are often associated with teen suicide. If I can be of further assistance in this or any other matter, please call my office.

Carl E. Heastie
Speaker of the Assembly

An important message from...  
Speaker of the Assembly Carl E. Heastie
www.nyassembly.gov

Important contacts

National Suicide Prevention Lifelines
800-273-TALK (8255)
800-Suicide (784-2433)
www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org

National Runaway Safeline
800-RUNAWAY
(786-2929)

NYS Domestic & Sexual Violence Hotline
800-942-6906

Sexual Assault Online Hotline
800-656-HOPE (4673)
www.rainn.org

NYS Child Abuse and Maltreatment Register
800-342-3720

The Trevor Lifeline
National suicide helpline for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning youth
www.thetrevorproject.org
866-488-7386
or text “Trevor” to 202-304-1200
Mon. to Fri. 3 to 10 p.m. EST

Teen Line
www.teenlineonline.org
or Text “Teen” to 839863; 3 to 6 p.m. EST

Mental Health Association in New York State
https://www.mentalhealthednys.org/

NYS Office of Mental Health, Find a Mental Health Program

District Office:
250 Broadway, Suite 2301
New York, NY 10007
212-312-1400

Albany Office:
Room 932 LOB
Albany, NY 12248
518-455-3791
speaker@nyassembly.gov

With help there is hope
Risk factors for teen suicide
Each year, thousands of young people die by suicide. Experts cite many possible reasons:
- Stress from external sources
- Fear of and problems dealing with change
- Unrealistically high expectations
- Unclear perception of death
- Low self-esteem, hopelessness
- Loss of something important (relationship, family stability)
- Depression, other mental illnesses or a substance abuse disorder
- Family violence, including physical or sexual abuse
- Access to a weapon at home
- Knowing someone with suicidal behavior
- Coping with being gay or transgender in a hostile environment at home, school or in the community
- Incarceration
- Physical illness
- Cyberbullying
- Attempted suicide previously

Cyberbullying
Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place over digital devices and includes sending, posting, or sharing negative, harmful, false or mean content about someone else. It can include sharing personal or private information about someone else causing embarrassment or humiliation. Cyberbullying most commonly occurs in social media, text messaging, instant messages and email often causing anger, embarrassment and depression.

Suicide Warning Signs
A person considering suicide will often leave clues, but in teens, these signs are more difficult to detect since many teens experience depression at one time or another.

Teens who are at risk often:
- Are preoccupied with death and dying
- Give away possessions, show lack of interest in favorite activities and/or display reckless behavior
- Change eating or sleeping patterns
- Show deep feelings of grief, uncontrolled anger, shame, hopelessness, guilt or anxiety
- Obtain weapons, pills or other means to kill him/herself
- Sleep too little or too much
- Write suicide notes
- Are isolated, lack a sense of purpose
- Talk about the future as if they won’t be there

They may also have problems in school, difficulty concentrating, become leathargic and tired, lose interest in friends or abuse drugs and alcohol.

How you can help
Ask the person if they are considering suicide. You will not be giving the person any new ideas.
- Listen and accept the feelings
- Accept what is said and treat it seriously
- Do not give advice, but show interest and support
- Do not say “everything will be all right”
- Do not back off or try to delay dealing with the person
- Communicate your concern for the well-being of the person and be nonjudgmental
- Encourage the person to seek help from people or agencies that specialize in crisis intervention and suicide prevention
- If the situation is immediately life-threatening, call 911 or take the person to a hospital emergency room
- Do not leave the person alone if you believe the risk of suicide is imminent
- Remove access to firearms and medication

Suicide threats should always be taken seriously. They are a cry for help. People who try to kill themselves and fail are likely to try again.

Learning how to cope
Coping with stress and depression can help people of all ages avoid suicidal thoughts. Some effective ways of coping include:
- Exercise
- A healthy diet
- Reading
- Spending time with people you care about
- Writing about what’s bothering you

Get professional help!
A person considering suicide needs professional care. You can call a hotline or contact a counselor.

Please remember
This information should not be considered a substitute for seeking professional treatment and guidance.

Symptoms & signs of drug abuse
Drugs and alcohol are often seen as an escape for young people dealing with the problems of growing up. Drug abuse, however, only makes the troubles of adolescence seem even more severe. This chart can help you identify the symptoms and signs of drug abuse.

Marijuana and hashish
- sweet, burnt odor
- neglect of appearance
- loss of interest and motivation
- impaired memory
- impaired muscle coordination
- impaired judgment
- slurred speech

Alcohol
- impaired muscle coordination
- impaired judgment
- slurred speech

Stimulants
(e.g. amphetamines, cocaine)
- excess activity
- restlessness
- irritability
- anxiety
- nervousness
- depression
- mood swings

Narcotics
(e.g. Demerol, morphine, heroin)
- drowsiness
- lethargy
- needle marks

Hallucinogens
(e.g. LSD, PCP, mescaline)
- slurred speech
- aggression
- blurred vision
- delusions
- incoordination
- hallucinations
- confusion
- mood swings
- agitation

Depressants
(e.g. barbiturates, Quaalude)
- drowsiness
- constricted pupils
- impaired judgment

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- A healthy diet
- Reading
- Spending time with people you care about
- Writing about what’s bothering you