



# Erika's Lighthouse Staff Training: Part 1: Signs & Symptoms



# Content Notice

This training contains discussion of depression, self-harm and suicide.

If you or someone you know is experiencing suicidal thoughts or is in crisis, please reach out to the 988 Lifeline, which provides 24/7, free, confidential support for people in distress.





# PART 1

## Signs and Symptoms of Depression & Suicide

### Agenda

- Current Statistics on Youth Mental Health
- Signs & Symptoms of Depression
- Signs & Symptoms of Suicide
- Shared Risk Factors & Warning Signs



# Youth Are In A Mental Health Crisis



# The Need is Significant:

We know young people are experiencing poor mental health, and we must act. The reality is troubling:

The Percentage of High School Students Who:*	2013 Total	2015 Total	2017 Total	2019 Total	2021 Total	2023 Total	Trend (All Years Available)	2-Year Change (2021-2023)
Experienced persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness	30	30	31	37	42	40		
Experienced poor mental health†	–	–	–	–	29	29	–	
Seriously considered attempting suicide	17	18	17	19	22	20		
Made a suicide plan	14	15	14	16	18	16		
Attempted suicide	8	9	7	9	10	9		
Were injured in a suicide attempt that had to be treated by a doctor or nurse	3	3	2	3	3	2		

Based on  
2023 CDC  
YRBS Data




# Suicide by the Numbers

Specifically relating to suicide, the statistics are alarming and widespread:

- Youth and young adults ages 10-24 years account for 15% of all suicides. (CDC)
- 20% of high school students have **seriously considered attempting suicide**. (CDC YRBS, 2023)
- 9% of high school students reported having **attempted suicide**. (CDC YRBS, 2023)
- Rates are rising among young people, suicidal behaviors among high school students increased more than 40%. These trends were exacerbated during the COVID-19 pandemic. (National Institute for Health)

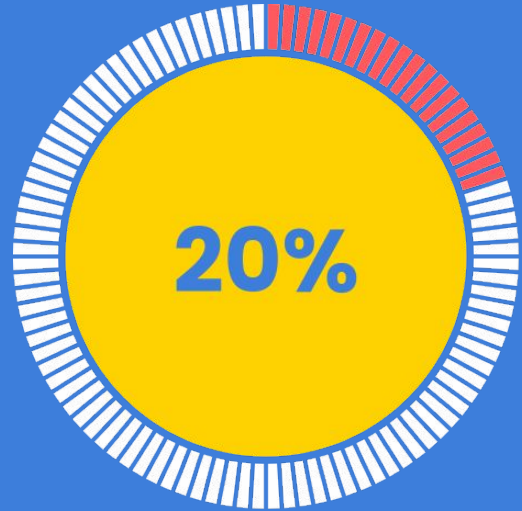
Suicide is the  
**SECOND**  
leading cause of death  
among 10-24 year olds.  
(CDC)



# Depression by the Numbers

- Depression is the number one risk factor for suicide.
- An estimated 5 million of adolescents, ages 12-17, have had at least one major depressive episode.
- At risk populations - females & LGBTQ+
- Depression is the most common mental health disorder that is accompanied by co-occurring disorders. 3 out of 4 teens with depression have also been diagnosed with anxiety and half have been diagnosed with behavior problems.
- 50% of mental health disorders begin before the age of 14 and 75% occur before 24.
- Childhood depression is more likely to persist into adulthood if gone untreated.

Up to 20% of young people will experience a major depressive episode before age 20. (NIMH)



# Importance of Prevention

Many warning signs & symptoms of depression and suicide are shared

	Depression	Suicide
Feelings of sadness, tearfulness, emptiness or hopelessness	✓	✓
Angry outbursts, irritability or frustration, even over small matters	✓	✓
Loss of interest or pleasure in most or all normal activities, hobbies or sports	✓	✓
Sleep disturbances, including insomnia or sleeping too much	✓	✓
Tiredness and lack of energy, so even small tasks take extra effort	✓	
Reduced appetite and weight loss or increased cravings for food and weight gain	✓	✓
Anxiety, agitation or restlessness	✓	
Slowed thinking, speaking or body movements	✓	
Feelings of worthlessness or guilt, fixating on past failures or self-blame	✓	
Trouble thinking, concentrating, making decisions and remembering things	✓	✓
Unexplained physical problems, such as back pain or headaches	✓	✓
Poor performance or poor attendance at school	✓	✓
Using recreational drugs or alcohol	✓	✓
Self-harm and unnecessary risk taking	✓	✓
Avoidance of social interaction	✓	✓
Frequent or recurrent thoughts of death, suicide, or suicide attempts	✓	✓
Giving away belongings or getting affairs in order for no reason		✓
Saying goodbye to people as if they will not be seen again		✓
Talking about suicide or death, even in a joking way		✓

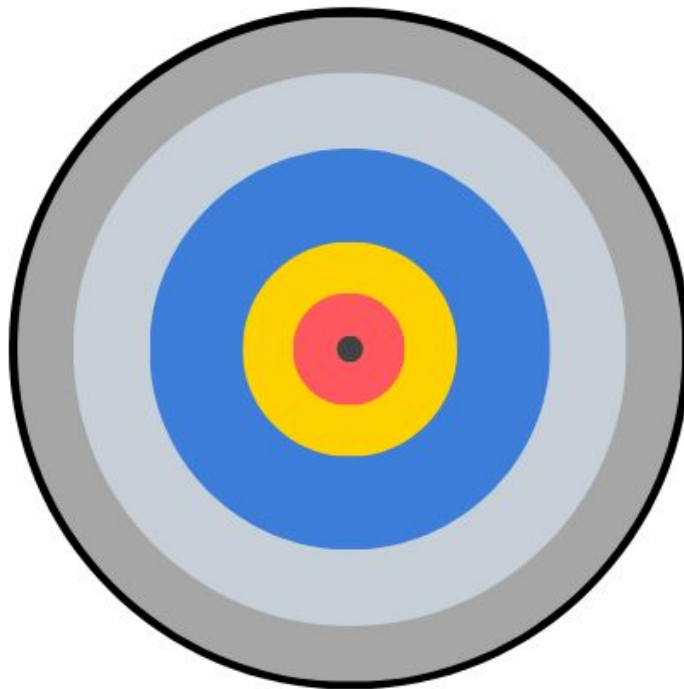


# Upstream Approach:

Depression Education is Suicide Prevention

## Behind the Suicide

In a given year of a school of 2,000 students



● One loss from suicide

● **180 (9%)**  
will attempt suicide

● **400 (20%)**  
seriously considered suicide

● **800 (40%)**  
report symptoms of depression

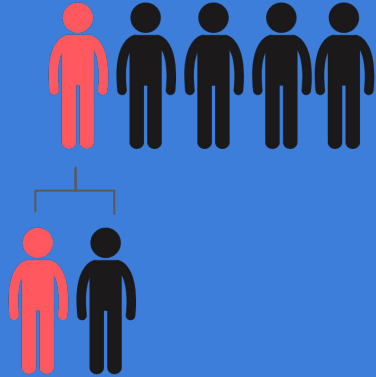
● **1,400 (70%)**  
believe anxiety/depression are **serious** problems among peers

● **1,920 (96%)**  
believe anxiety/depression are problems among peers

*First three statistics from CDC VRBS, 2023.  
Last two statistics from PEW, 2021.*



# Early Identification is Critical



1 out of 5 young people will experience depression before adulthood

50% of those will be symptomatic by the age of 14

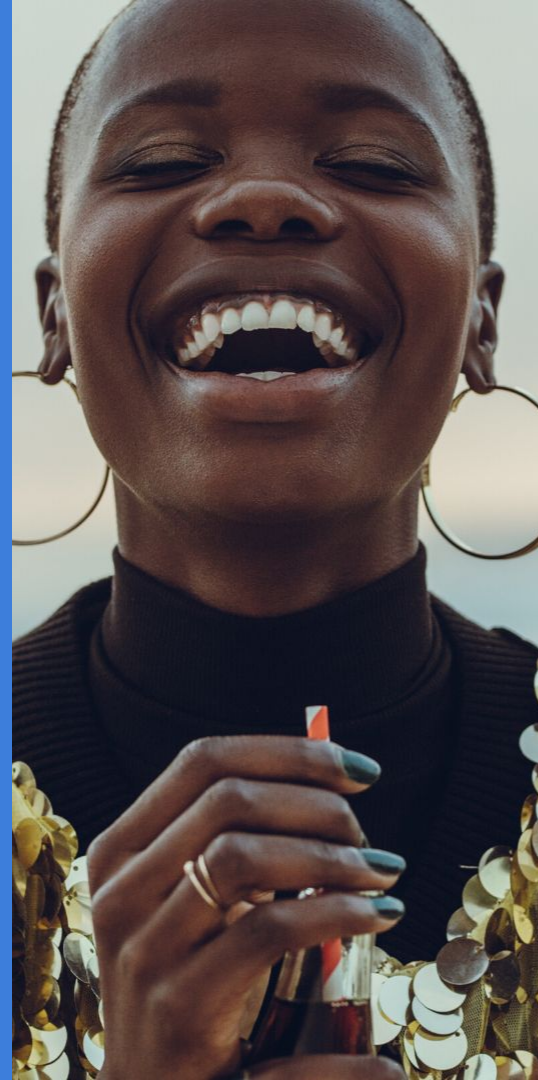


# Signs & Symptoms of Depression

Depression symptoms can vary from mild to severe and can include:

- **Feeling sad or having a depressed mood**
- **Loss of interest or pleasure in activities once enjoyed**
- Changes in appetite — weight loss or gain unrelated to dieting
- Trouble sleeping or sleeping too much
- Loss of energy or increased fatigue
- Increase in purposeless physical activity (e.g., hand-wringing or pacing) or slowed movements and speech (actions observable by others)
- Feelings of worthlessness or guilt
- Difficulty thinking, concentrating or making decisions
- Thoughts of death or suicide

\*The individual must be experiencing five or more symptoms during the same 2-week period and at least one of the symptoms should be either (1) depressed mood or (2) loss of interest or pleasure.



# More than Just Sadness

## Sadness:

Often connected to a specific cause like a disappointment or setback.

Temporary; if it lasts more than two weeks and is accompanied by other warning signs, it can cause impairment and turn into depression over time.

Symptoms typically pass after using coping strategies.

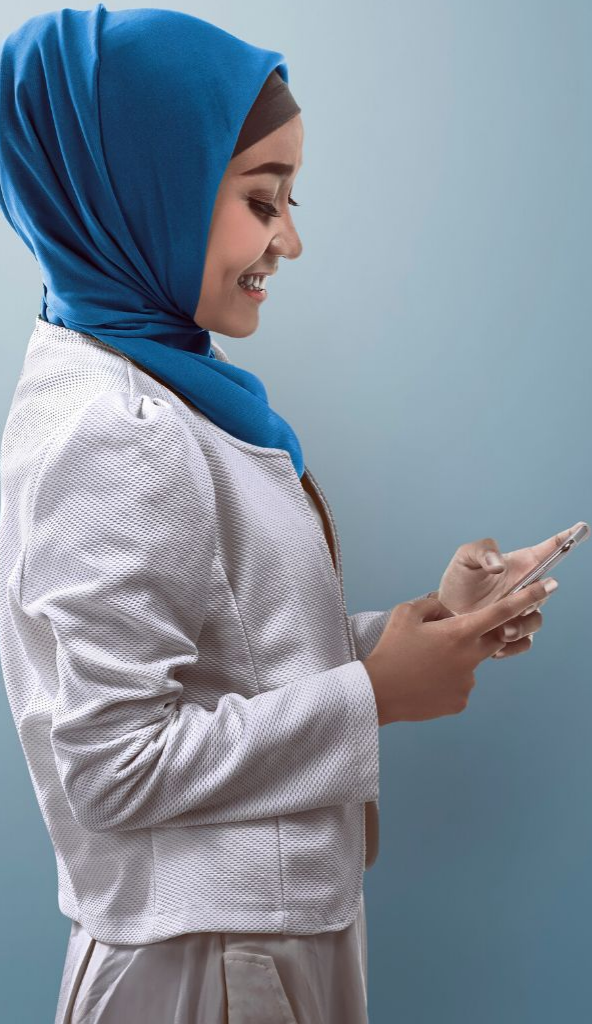
## Depression:

Doesn't always have a direct cause; can be triggered by a situation, early experience, and trauma and often affects overall well-being and quality of life, not just emotional state.

Is a diagnosable mood disorder that has specific signs & symptoms that last everyday for two weeks or longer.

Symptoms may intensify without treatment.





# Depression in Teens

- Irritability
- Self defeating attitude
- Bizarre sleep patterns
- Substance use
- Risk taking
- Aggression
- Acting out
- Problems in school



# Depression in Teens



Lindsey





# Risk Factors of Depression

- Personal or family history of depression
- Major life changes, trauma, or stress
- Certain physical illnesses and medications





It's easy to tell when an adolescent is depressed because they just cry all the time.

### **That's a MYTH**

The FACT is that adolescents with depression may have various symptoms. They may cry, they may seem irritable or anxious. They may have no energy and feel tired, have trouble sleeping; or they sleep too much.





Teens are just moody. Depression and self-destructive behavior is rare.

**That's a MYTH**

**THE FACT** is that both forms of behavior are common in adolescents.





# Treatment

**Treatment is effective, yet hard to get.**

In 2021, an estimated 41% of US adolescents with depression received treatment in the past year.

Stigma and other barriers play a role in youth not receiving the treatment they need.

Approximately  $\frac{2}{3}$  of teens receiving mental health treatment are receiving services at school.

Schools & parents can create protective relationships with students & help them grow into healthy adulthood.



# Warning Signs of Suicide

## Talking about:

- Wanting to die
- Great guilt or shame
- Being a burden to others

## Feeling:

- Empty, hopeless, trapped, or having no reason to live
- Extremely sad, more anxious, agitated, or full of rage
- Unbearable emotional or physical pain

## Change in behavior, such as:

- Making a plan or researching ways to die
- Withdrawing from friends, saying goodbye, or giving away prized possessions
- Taking dangerous risks such as driving extremely fast
- Displaying extreme mood swings
- Eating or sleeping more or less
- Using drugs or alcohol more often

If these warning signs apply to you or someone you know, get help as soon as possible, particularly if the behavior is new or has increased recently.





# Risk Factors of Suicide

- Depression, other mental disorders, or substance abuse disorder
- Certain medical conditions
- Chronic pain
- A prior suicide attempt
- Family history of suicide, a mental disorder or substance abuse
- Family violence, including physical or sexual abuse
- Having guns or other firearms in the home
- Having recently been released from prison or jail
- Being exposed to others' suicidal behavior, such as that of family members, peers, or celebrities

Many people have some of these risk factors but do not attempt suicide. It is important to note that suicide is not a normal response to stress. **Suicidal thoughts or actions are a sign of extreme distress and should not be ignored.**





Most young people thinking about suicide never seek or ask for help.

### **That's a MYTH**

THE FACT is that often, young people will tell their peers of their thoughts and plans. 66% of young people first report suicidal thoughts to a friend.





Most suicide attempts or deaths happen without warning.

## **That's a MYTH**

THE FACT is that warning signs, verbally and behaviorally, precede most suicides. In most cases where someone attempts or dies by suicide, there were warning signs in their behaviors and/or conversations.





People who die by suicide are selfish and take the easy way out.

### **That's a MYTH**

THE FACT is that typically people do not die by suicide because they do not want to live. People die by suicide because they want to end their pain and suffering.



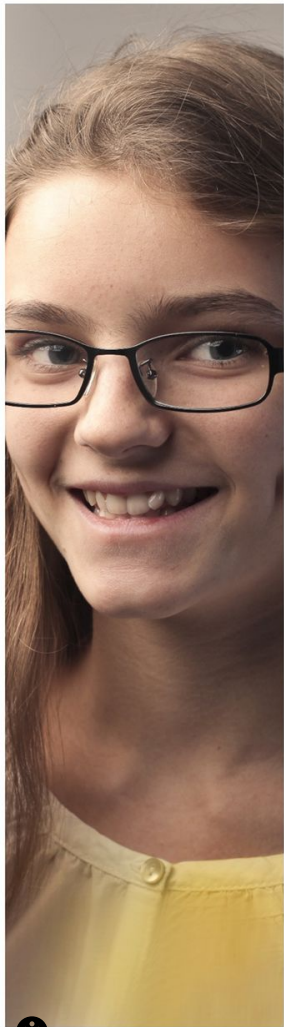


Suicide is not preventable.

**That's a MYTH**

THE FACT is that early identification and intervention make it possible to help someone before they attempt suicide. You can be someone's lifeline.





# Thank You!

## Program Support

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