

# Suicide in the Adolescent: *Suffering in Silence*

Caring Communities Program  
Duke Divinity School

Help us reach out to hurting kids...



## Agenda

- Welcome & Introductions -
- Overview of Suicide and statistics
- Adolescent Growth and Development
- Risk Factors
- Warning signs (or not)
- Feelings - Yours, Mine, and Ours
- Resources
- SPAN, NC
- The Life Keeper's Memory Quilt -
- Overview of the Yellow Ribbon Program
- Now What?? The Safe Harbor, The Yellow Ribbon Network-
- [light4life@yellowribbon.org](mailto:light4life@yellowribbon.org)

## The Facts

- Suicide is the fastest growing killer of youth in America today!
- It is the second leading cause of death to teens, killing 3 to 6 times more often than homicide.
- Second leading cause of death for collage students.
- One teen is killed every 90 seconds.
- 6500 teens per year in the United States.
- 300-400% more attempts than completions
- Girls attempt 4 to 1, Boys complete 4 to 1

## Growth and Developmental Tasks in the Adolescent

- ◆ Independence from Dependence
- ◆ Body Image Assimilation
- ◆ Sexual Drives Begin and Increase
- ◆ Group to Individual Relationships
- ◆ Concrete to Abstract Cognition
- ◆ Determines Value System Identity
- ◆ Career Plans Create Pressure

## Risk Factors

- Problems with school or the law
- Unexpected pregnancy
- A stressful family life. (having parents who are depressed or are substance abusers, or a family history of suicide)
- Loss of security...fear of authority, peers, group or gang members
- Failing in school or failing to pass an important test
- Breakup of a romance
- Suicide of a friend or family member
- Stress due to new situations; college or relocating to a new community
- an important test
- A serious illness or injury to oneself
- Seriously injuring another person or causing another person's death (i.e. auto accident)
- Major loss...of a loved one, a home, divorce in the family, a trauma, a relationship

## Warning Signs

- Abrupt changes in personality
- Previous suicide attempt
- Use of drugs and/or alcohol
- Change in eating pattern - significant weight change
- Change in sleeping pattern - insomnia/oversleeping
- Unwillingness or inability to communicate
- Giving away possessions
- Depression
- Confusion - Inability to concentrate
- Chronic Pain, Panic or Anxiety
- Perfectionism
- Accident prone (carelessness)
- Unusual sadness, discouragement and loneliness.
- Talk of wanting to die
- Neglect of academic work and/or personal appearance
- Family disruptions - divorce, trauma, losing loved one.
- Running away from home or truancy from school.
- Rebelliousness - reckless behavior.
- Withdrawal from people/activities they love.
- Restlessness



## Peers are RESCUERS

Charlotte Ross, in the book,  
Suicide in the Adolescent  
says:

91% of suicide victims use a friend as a rescuer. These teenagers are dangerously inadequate as a counselor or a rescuer. Intervention is dangerously delayed because they find conflict between providing confidentiality to a friend and their inability to perceive or assess actual risk. "Clearly, then, the prevalence of teenage depression, the suicidal impulses that often accompany it, and the teenager's preference for peer confidants indicates a need for prevention programs which educate adolescents both as potential victims and potential rescuers. Yet while adolescents may be woefully unprepared for the rescuer role, they are likely to fall heir to it nonetheless. It would seem that since adolescents determine who their helpers are to be, ( their peers are and likely will continue to be) that every effort should be extended to equip them to deal, and although we can strive to increase the choices acceptable to them, their peers are and likely will continue to be a major resource."

## Even the Church Struggles...

- “If you just put your faith in God...”
- “Suicide is an unforgivable sin...”
- “Depression is a crutch- a weakness...”
- “Good people shouldn’t have bad feelings...”
- “They won’t be allowed to be buried at the church...”

## What Do We Do Now???

- Make a Commitment
- Research prevention programs in your area
- Devote 3 to 1 time to preparing teens
- Devote time to educating adults
- Persist with county officials
- Join others in the name of prevention
- Petition Representatives for legislation

## *Suicide Prevention Resources*

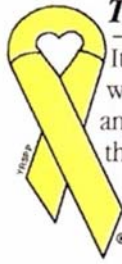
- National Mental Health Association 1-800-969-NMHA
- American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry  
1-202-966-7300
- American Academy of Pediatrics  
1-847-228-5005
- National Suicide Hotline  
1-888-SUICIDE
- SPAN, USA 1-888-649-1419
- Caring Communities Program  
919-401-3737
- SPAN, NC 919-380-0854
- [yellowribbon.org](http://yellowribbon.org)



## International Yellow Ribbon Suicide Awareness and Prevention Week September 21-27, 2003



**Yellow Ribbon Suicide Prevention Program®**  
Light For Life Foundation International  
PO Box 644, Westminster, CO 80036-0644



### ***THIS RIBBON IS A LIFELINE!®***

It carries the message that there are those who care and will help! If you are in need and don't know how to ask for help, take this card to a counselor, teacher, clergy, parent or friend and say:

***"I NEED TO USE MY YELLOW RIBBON"***

The Yellow Ribbon Program is in loving memory of Michael Emme

### ***THIS CARD IS A CRY FOR HELP!***

- **Stay** with the person - you are their *lifeline!*
- **Listen**, *really listen*. Take them seriously!
  - **Get**, or **call**, **help immediately!**

Get help now: **1-800-SUICIDE**

*24 hr. a day - toll free*

**YELLOW RIBBON SUICIDE PREVENTION PROGRAM** • [www.yellowribbon.org](http://www.yellowribbon.org)  
PO Box 644 • Westminster, CO 80036-0644 • 303.429.3550 • Fax: 303.426.4496

## ***Peace I leave with you,...***

My peace I give  
unto you: not  
as the world  
giveth, give I  
unto you. Let  
not your heart  
be troubled,  
neither let it  
be afraid.

John 14:27



# *Faithfulness....*

“It is essential to our worship that we attempt to understand suffering and abide, for our care of one another makes us both safe and whole.”

Anne Packett, Health Ministries Educator

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