

## Mental Health, Depression & Suicide

### SIGNS TO LOOK FOR

- Signs of self-harm such as wearing long sleeves/ long pants when it's hot, not showing skin.
- Extreme mood swings and out-of-control behaviors.
- Neglecting personal hygiene and decrease in self-care behavior.
- Sudden and significant changes in eating, sleeping, or socializing patterns.
- Avoiding and fearing a certain environment, situations, or social interactions (schools are an example of this).

### ! IMPORTANT

- Take the time to listen to your child and seek professional help if needed.
- NEVER ignore any talk of death.
- Take what your child says SERIOUSLY. Be gentle and listen.
- Listen to your child thoroughly before responding.
- Watch for risk factors for suicide.

### What can you do to H.E.L.P.?

- H** **Highlight** a healthy life such as diet, good sleep, and exercise, and promote good behavior.
- E** **Educate** yourself on what are symptoms of depression and suicide.
- L** **Listen** to your child Encourage them to learn about coping skills and activities.
- P** **Provide** a safety plan. Develop a list of people to call when Feelings get worse.

## Communication Tips

Focus on listening, not lecturing (emphasize no consequences for your child opening up)

- Be gentle with words, not harsh
- Acknowledge their feelings and thoughts
- Take every conversation SERIOUSLY!
- Use AEP:

### Acknowledge | Emphasize | Probe

Ex: *"It sounds like you are feeling really hurt [Acknowledge]. I'm so sorry you are feeling this way [Empathize]. What exactly about this situation is upsetting for you [Probe]?"*

### RESOURCES

Talk to your child about resources and different people they can reach out to if they are ever a victim.

- The Women's Fund What About Me? Publication
- Texas Youth Helpline (available through text and call): 1-877-939-4363
- Mental Health and suicidal thoughts hot-line: 988 (911 of mental health)
- Texas Human trafficking resource center: Call: 1-888-373-788, Text: 233733
- Crime stoppers: 713-222-84 77
- Trevor's Project (LGBTQ mental health support hot-line): 866-488-7386



For more information or to partner with us, visit [TheWomensFund.org](http://TheWomensFund.org) or call 713.623.6543

## A Parent's Guide to Difficult Conversations



[TheWomensFund.org](http://TheWomensFund.org)

## Sex & Sexual Assault

### 5 TIPS TO START THE TALK

- 1** **Begin early!** Start the conversation now to grow the communication between you and your child.
- 2** **Create an open dialogue.** Your home can be a safe space for your child to open up. Explain what body autonomy is.
- 3** **Educate yourself** on topics like sex, sexuality, and relationships. Proper education can help you know the facts about each topic.
- 4** **Respect different values/beliefs.** Your child may have different values, respect it.
- 5** **Listen as much as you talk.** When you listen carefully, your child feels important and valued.

### SIGNS OF SEXUAL ASSAULT/RAPE

- Unexplained fear or dislike of certain people or places
- Refusing to talk about a 'secret' he/she has with an adult or older child
- A sudden urge to be left alone and isolated
- Sleep disturbances such as insomnia, vivid dreams, and recurring nightmares
- Fear of certain characteristics of a person.  
Ex: side-burns, straight hair, type of clothing or car

### ? DID YOU KNOW?

Most perpetrators are known by the family or child and 1 in 5 kids are molested before age 18.

## Gun Violence & School Shootings

### IT'S EASY AS 1, 2, 3

- 1** **Make time to talk!** Kids are more likely to open up if you start the conversations first. They will have lots of questions. Let their questions be your guide.
- 2** **Reassure your child that they are safe!** When talking about these topics, kids picture everything they see on social media. Explain how there are people that are looking over their safety.
- 3** **Review Safety procedures!** Make sure your child knows who to contact in case of an emergency (911) and emergency contact numbers if they need to reach an adult.

### TALKING POINTS

- Start the conversation by talking about a recent current event. Ex: Uvalde School shooting.
- Explain how social media can play an impact on gun violence and school shootings.
- Remind them that guns and weapons are not toys. Emphasize that fire arms can really harm people.

### EMPHASIZE THAT THEY ARE S.A.F.E.

- S** Look for **Signs**
- A** **Act** immediately—Tell someone if someone has been rumoring shootings or angry
- F** Open up about your thoughts, **Feelings** and worries
- E** **Employ** a plan.  
Plan a disaster: phone numbers, 911

## Safety & Sex Trafficking

### PUT A S.T.O.P TO SEX TRAFFICKING

- S** **Start** the talk.
- T** **Trust** your child.
- O** **Open** dialogue, be open minded.
- P** **Practice** and repeat.

### KNOW THE FACTS

- Majority of human trafficking happens online
- Predators are usually someone the victim knows
- Both women and men can be the abuser/predator

### TALKING TIPS

- Talking to your kids early about what healthy relationships look like can help them be aware of the red flags.
- Even young kids understand that someone trying to force them to do something they don't want is wrong.
- Emphasize that saying NO means no.
- Make sure you talk to your child about people they can go to if they ever feel uncomfortable.
- Advise your child to never be alone in certain places and never share personal information online.

It is important that you educate yourself on the apps and the places your child frequents.

