



CENTRE COUNTY PREVENTION COALITION
A SAMHSA Funded Drug-Free Community Coalition
Supported By Centre County Drug and Alcohol



January 20, 2010 – Teen Depression and Suicide

Evelyn Wald, MS, M.Divinity, is a Licensed Professional counselor specializing in grief and loss.

Amy, a 17-year-old honor student and captain of the girls swim team, called her Dad. “Please come and pick me up Daddy,” she asked slurring her words. Dad got her location and picked her up. She was drunk and stumbled into the car. “What’s going on Amy?” he asked. She sat quiet for a while and then burst into tears, “It’s all so overwhelming. I can’t take the pressure anymore. Jeff and I broke up weeks ago. I haven’t been eating right or sleeping...and tonight I got drunk – Dad, I don’t even like alcohol! Please, help me.”

And he did. Amy went to see their primary physician who prescribed an antidepressant and she also began seeing a counselor. Amy told her counselor that she had contemplated taking a lot of sleeping pills, hoping never to wake up again. Amy reached out of her desperation and her Dad responded with care and action. Teen depression is real and requires treatment and intervention.

Adolescence is an unsettling time. It’s a period in life filled with intense change, conflict and confusion. There are many physical, emotional and social changes and struggles that teenagers experience. There are many factors that contribute to increasing the possible risk for suicide. There is no all encompassing method for determining if an adolescent will attempt or complete suicide.

Every 18 minutes in the United States someone dies by suicide. Suicide is also the third leading cause of death among teenagers. It is also reported that 90% of those who die by suicide have a diagnosable psychiatric disorder at the time of their death.

We need to educate ourselves and learn to recognize teens who may be at risk for suicide and who may need help.

Risk factors include thoughts, feelings, and behaviors, as well as biological and genetic factors. These risk factors include feelings of hopelessness or isolation, feelings of worthlessness or rejection, a loss of interest in activities and friends, changes in sleeping and/or eating habits, substance abuse, aggressive behaviors, and previous attempts.

There are also protective factors (a major component of all CTC programs) that may reduce the likelihood of suicidal behavior. Enhancing these factors as well as reducing risk factors is essential for preventing suicide. Protective factors include strong family connections, positive self-esteem, sense of responsibility for others (including pets), problem-solving/coping skills, a strong faith and involvement in a religious community. So, what CAN we do? Pay attention. Talk to your children and listen. Don’t judge them, lecture or criticize them. Show them you care and want to understand their feelings and help them. Treat your children with respect. You can make a difference.

Let’s work together as a community that truly cares for one another. Your care and concern could make the difference between life and death. Stay involved, stay connected, be informed, and take action.

Care Partnership: Centre Region *Communities That Care*
Serving State College Area School District
Dawn Taylor, Community Mobilizer, 814-237-6191
dtaylor105@gmail.com
Web address: carecentreregion.org

Centre County *Communities That Care*
Serving the School Districts of Bald Eagle, Bellefonte, Penns Valley, and
Philipsburg-Osceola
Elizabeth Eckley, Community Mobilizer, 814-404-9511
centrecountyctc@yahoo.com
Web address: centrecountyctc.org