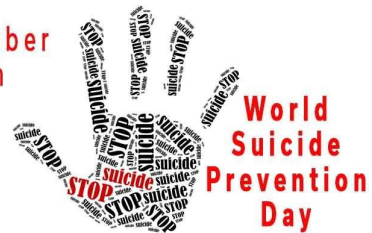




September 2022 Newsletter

Suicide Prevention Day is September 10, 2022.

September
10th



Why are we talking about this? Because there are people that are hurting and don't see other options. There are people that won't share their struggles because of stigma. We have friends and family that don't know what to do.

In this newsletter you can:

- Read stories about teens sharing their anxiety about the start of school.
- Watch a YouTube video about a teacher fighting against suicide and her students' struggles.
- Read about techniques on how to navigate making friends.
- Watch a YouTube video called *My Son's Suicide Note Will Change Your Life Today*
- Find tips on how to be hardworking in our thoughts.

People don't fake depression, they fake being okay.
Remember that.
Be kind."

Robin Williams



Teens Aren't the Only Ones Anxious About School

By Sherry Krueger, co-founder of Teens Finding Hope and book author

"I'm so worried about her going back to school!" I nodded in agreement. Our sweet, anxious granddaughter had a terrible year last year in seventh grade, and now eighth grade looms right around the corner. The countless nights of calming her suicidal thoughts fill my mind. Why has school come around again so quickly?

I guess it's typical for family members to worry about the start of school. We wonder if the crowded classrooms will keep teachers from adequately supporting our babies. We worry that their emotional challenges won't be accepted or understood. We whisper prayers that nothing will happen to cause an undoing of all of their progress. And we can't. We just can't face another night worrying if our children will survive future suicidal episodes.

To be honest, one of the wishes I have for my granddaughter is for her therapist to visit some classrooms. I don't say this to criticize her therapist. On the contrary, she's been a blessing, and her suggestions have worked wonderfully for my granddaughter—at home. They just haven't worked in the classroom.

- Fidgets weren't allowed
- Breaks weren't allowed either
- Extra time for assignments (written into her IEP) wasn't given. (The teachers "knew she could get it done in time")
- Assignments and books weren't sent home when she was suicidal, so she got behind in her work, which caused more anxiety
- Phones weren't allowed in the classroom, so the calming apps, soothing music and support texts went unused
- The busy classroom didn't allow time to for my granddaughter to stop and work through the thinking strategies she was taught

I imagine other children have faced similar obstacles. As suicides are on the rise, I'm anxious to find innovative strategies that will work in any situation our children find themselves in, even their classrooms. What can we do differently that would help them in the classrooms we have today—the post-Covid classrooms where teachers are stressed to get the children caught up? Where they are skeptical students can use their phones for reasons other than cheating? Where teachers doubt the reason for extra time is something other than avoidance and pampering?

[If you have ideas that have been successful, we'd love to hear them.](#) Below is a link where you can share your most proven strategies. Everyone with this link will have access. If enough people take time to add something, we can end up with ideas from around the country. It would be wonderful to begin the year with new tools to add to our toolbox.

Share Your Proven-Strategies

The Fight Against Teen Suicide: One Teacher's Story

Talk to Someone Today / a 13 minute video



Navigating the Waters of Adolescent Friendships

By Sherry Krueger, co-founder of Teens Finding Hope and book author



It's a common, but painful, scenario: a young adolescent enters school with a peer group they've had for years. New friends join the group, and the dynamics change. This adolescent now begins to struggle emotionally and socially, trying to figure out what has gone wrong. It can be crushing to their self-esteem and a trigger for suicidal thoughts. At least, it was for both my daughter and my granddaughter. Having lived through this scenario twice, I can honestly say it doesn't get easier the second time around. Luckily, I have learned some things during the years, which helped us navigate the stormy seas. This is what worked for us.

The first thing we did was work through the idea that people change as they grow. We began by thinking of aspects of my granddaughter's personality that had changed. *What is different about you now? Why do you think you've changed in this way? Do you think others are surprised with how you've changed?* Afterwards, we discussed how her friends were acting in ways that surprised her and why she was surprised. We eventually came to the understanding that it's normal for people to grow and change, and it's normal for people to grow apart sometimes as they all change and get different interests.

She was sad, though, and felt isolated. Her friend group had begun to subtly leave her out. New clothes, hair styles, and attempts at fitting in could help make school psychologically safer, but they couldn't change the social dynamics playing out in front of her. She needed a new tribe to hang with, one that accepted who she was at that point of time.

Her parents and I began to look for ways to get her involved in groups outside of school, groups that focused around her talents and interests. We sent her to art camps, photography lessons, and youth activities that would highlight her strengths as well as get her in touch with kids who had the same interests. And

we did new things as a family to expose her to additional activities and interests.

Most importantly, we didn't villainize the friends who were hurting her, knowing they are also navigating the seas of adolescence and doing the best they can. We modeled grace and thinking patterns that would combat the stories people tell themselves about others' motivations.

The rest of the work fell on her therapist, who helped her work through scenarios she didn't feel comfortable sharing with us. My granddaughter is still searching for a tribe of friends to replace the old; but she is emotionally stronger and filled with hope for the coming year. I am hoping it happens for her and am standing by as a lifesaver if she needs me.

Hardworking in Our Thoughts

By Kristi Barth, co-founder of Teens Finding Hope and book author

I recently read a story about being “Hardworking in our thoughts.” It's been a struggle in this pandemic to just go with the flow, we might have become complacent in our thinking. Can you relate to this? Have you found yourself cutting corners on your thinking? Have you let something go to voicemail or not answered an email because you didn't want to deal with someone or something that may take more effort?

Thoughts and beliefs drive actions, which ultimately drive results. We need to focus our efforts where it counts—in the way we think.

Fall is coming. It's a new start in school, cooler weather and we move forward toward another year. Let's become deliberate and intentional in our “hard working” thoughts. Let's focus on being encouragers, problem solvers and work to write our own unique stories. Let's face new opportunities head on, ask questions or for help when we need to and jump into life. Here is a neat quote: “When facing a difficult task, act as if it is impossible to fail. If you're going after Moby Dick, take along the tartar sauce.” (Meaning you plan to accomplish your goal). Take time to celebrate successes, special events, take a vacation, and visit family.

Remember you are resilient and strong. Systems, support and encouragement will help us feel successful. Cheers to a great rest of the year!

ENTHUSIASM IS COMMON.
ENDURANCE IS RARE.

Angela Duckworth



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H. JACKSON BROWN, JR.



“The worst day of my life was my son’s failed attempt when he said after, “I didn’t think anyone would care.” It’s been over 15 years since I heard that sentence

and I am crying as I write it. I had no clue.”

My Son's Suicide Note Will Change Your Life Today / Jason Reid

In this video, Jason Reid and a group of fathers have an intense conversation about teen suicide. Jason shares his heartfelt story as well as crucial parenting advice that can have life-saving consequences. Witness the power of vulnerability and discover simple ways you can transform your relationship with your kids by giving them the tools to thrive in life.



Reach out for help if you need it.

Talk to a friend or call a hotline for support.

Teens Finding Hope has a wallet-sized brochure that can help provide some support. It will give you ideas for how to help someone and the numbers you can call for support. **Just click on the image below to download:**

How do I know if my friend needs help?

Notice: Big changes in your friend (eating, mood, hanging out, etc.).

Ask: Are you thinking about suicide? Do you want to hurt yourself?



How do I get help for my friend?

1. Call 911
2. Go to the Emergency Room
3. Seek help from a teacher, counselor, or trusted adult
4. DO NOT leave your friend alone
5. Call or text one of the suicide hotlines



There are many safe places to get support.

1-800-SUICIDE
1-714-NEWTEEN
6-10 pm PST
1-800-273-TALK
1-800-448-3000

Text:
teen2teen to 839863
4-10 pm PST
Crisis Text Line 741741
You can contact any of these anonymously just to talk or get information.



#YourLifeMatters



#IAMVALUABLE



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