



Los Angeles County
Office of Education

Employee Assistance
Service for Education

SEPTEMBER 2021 |



CONNECT WITH EASE

Employee Assistance Service for Education

Overview:

*Raising Awareness about
Suicide Prevention*

Self-Care and Support

EASE CAN HELP DURING DIFFICULT TIMES

CONNECT WITH EASE:

(800) 882-1341

**Free confidential professional
help for
district employees and family
members:**

Family troubles. Emotional distress.
Job stress.
Anxiety. Drug/alcohol use. Grief.
Loss.
Life transition issues.

Professional counselors are ready
to help.
Call the EASE Hotline for 24/7
assistance.

MESSAGE FROM EASE

In the month of September, we work to spread awareness and information about suicide which is a highly stigmatized, and often taboo, topic. Awareness and information about suicide helps to shift public perception and reduce the stigma to mental health and seeking help. We also take time to reflect and mourn the losses of those that have died by suicide. Grieving the loss of a loved one that has died by suicide causes immense emotional pain for surviving family members and friends. The pain cannot be described, and the intensity of the loss cannot be measured in any way, shape, or form. Suicide is a tragic reaction to stressful life situations — and all the more tragic because suicide can be prevented. There is a lot of shame involved when a person is experiencing emotional pain and because of stigma, many suffer alone. It may seem like there's no way to solve one's problems and that suicide is the only way to end the pain. It is important to know that having suicidal thoughts is not a character flaw and does not mean that the person is "crazy" or "weak". It only signifies that one is experiencing more pain or sadness than can be coped with at the given moment. But there are steps to stay safe — and to start enjoying life again. Understanding the issues concerning suicide and mental health is an important way to take part in suicide prevention, help others in crisis, and change the conversation around suicide. Suicide is not only a problem in mental health, it is a serious public health issue. Everyone has a role to play in suicide prevention. Be aware, know the signs, reach out to support others in need, and practice your own self care.

If you, or someone you love, is struggling with mental health or with thoughts of suicide, help is available! EASE is available 24/7 for immediate confidential telephonic counseling support.

Raising Awareness to Suicide Prevention

Suicide is a growing public health issue. This month we bring awareness to suicide prevention in order to spread the needed information for individuals, families and friends. Know the signs and how to get help for you or someone you know. According to the CDC, suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death among people aged 10-34, but overall in the United States suicide is the 10th leading cause of death. Suicidal thoughts can affect anyone regardless of age, gender or background, and should always be taken serious. Suicidal thoughts or comments are known as "suicidal ideation", they could be vague comments like "I just want to end it all". In 2019, more than 47,500 people died by suicide, 12 million seriously thought about suicide and 1.4 million attempted suicide. There is hope, suicide is preventable. Suicidal thoughts are a symptom which can be treated with the help of mental health professionals.

Unfortunately, many people who are going through mental health challenges and/ or suicidal thoughts do not seek help due to the stigma surrounding mental health. Research suggests that when we talk about suicide it reduces the risk. Being open to have a compassionate conversation about suicide reduces the stigma and empowers each individual to be a source of support and to seek help. Family and friends struggle mentally and emotionally when they experience a loss to suicide or attempted suicide of someone they love. Knowing the signs and where to go for support is important.

Know the Warning Signs

People who are thinking about suicide demonstrate behaviors or make comments that may indicate that there is a potential risk especially if the behavior is new, has increased and/or seems related to a painful event, loss, or change. There may be more signs than the ones listed below:

- Talking about death or suicide
- Looking for a way to kill themselves
- Talking about feeling trapped or in unbearable pain
- Talking about being a burden to others
- Giving away belongings/ putting affairs in order
- Increasing the use of alcohol or drugs
- Acting anxious or agitated; or behaving recklessly
- Withdrawing or feeling isolated
- Showing rage or displaying extreme mood swings

Practice Self-Care

When trying to help support someone who is going through a crisis it is extremely important to ensure you are mindful of your own well-being. It can take an emotional toll and in order to be the best source of support for others you must take care of you too. Self-care doesn't have to be complicated, especially if you are struggling to maintain your physical and emotional wellness. Self-care reduces the effects of stress and restores balance in our life. Here are a few easy ways to engage in self-care.

- Stay in touch with your social connections and network of support.
- Get enough sleep and rest.
- Eat healthy and don't skip meals.
- Take slow, deep breaths throughout the day.
- Maintain physical activity, this could be taking the stairs instead of the elevator, or parking further away to get the extra body movement in.
- Practice relaxation techniques: meditation, journaling, listen to music.
- Find what brings you joy and engage in that activity.
- Ask for help.

<https://www.cdc.gov/suicide/index.html>
<https://www.nami.org/get-involved/awareness-events/suicide-prevention-awareness-month>
<https://www.bethe1to.com/the-importance-of-self-care/>
<https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/how-we-can-all-prevent-suicide/>

How To Help

Research shows that when you provide support it reduces the risk of suicide. Here are steps you could take to help: ask if you are concerned about someone, ask if they are thinking about suicide. Actively listen without judgement. Keep them safe by reducing access to any lethal means. Help them stay connected by creating a safety plan, a network of resources and support to help them take positive action. Supportive contact is an important part of suicide prevention so follow up with them. Lastly, learn more through the resources below.

Where To Get Support

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

800-273-TALK (8255) its free, confidential and 24/7

Crisis Text Line (24/7)

Text LA to 741741

LACDMH Help Line- Crisis and mental health support and resources
(800) 854-7771

Suicide Prevention Resource Center

Effective prevention resources and programs

Alliance of Hope for Suicide Loss Survivors

Support, resources, and networking for survivors

<https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/promote-national-suicide-prevention-month/>

TALK TO US

EASE has counselors if you want to talk.

(800) 882-1341