

Biblical Counseling Center publishes eCounselor's Weekly guide, to encourage counselors and all believers in discipleship and daily growth.

"Why Would She Want to Kill Herself?"

By Sherry Allchin, M.A.

Understanding suicide is one of the hardest things we are asked to do as humans. I just talked to a parent whose teen is struggling because her 15 yr. old friend killed himself after several years of bullying by other teens at school. Suicide is the 11th leading cause of death in the US, one about every 15 minutes! It is the third leading cause of death between the ages of 15-24 years, with half a million teenagers attempting suicide. More than 5,000 seniors kill themselves annually. Why would a person we love want to end their life? And what is our responsibility to help and how can we?



When someone attempts suicide, it is not really that they want to die, but rather that they just don't know how to live and have lost all hope that life will get any better. They have chosen to take matters into their own hands to end the pain they feel. We as family and friends, or as counselors, can make a world of difference by our responses to their struggles and by knowing the warning signs. We may not save everyone from suicide, but if we can save even one, it's worth reading this article and going to our website for additional help.

What are some warning signs?

When a person talks about suicide or death or makes statements like "I wish I had never been born," and starts to give away things they have valued, or planning for the care of pets or dependents, be alert and ask more questions. Another clue is a change in eating, sleeping or grooming habits, or a sudden burst of energy and joy from someone who has been depressed for a long time (It may indicate that a decision has been made and a calm before the storm). Also be alert to the withdrawal from favorite people or activities, or being reckless with dangerous activities.

Other high-risk indicators would include a history of drug or alcohol use, physical or sexual abuse or being in some kind of trouble. When there is a history of depression and antidepressant drugs are given, some have the side effect of suicidal desires and actually make matters worse rather than better! Those who have previously attempted suicide or who have a close friend or relative that has committed suicide are more likely to try. For a more thorough list, visit our website for more

signs if you suspect a loved one is suicidal.

What can I do to help?

Encourage the person to talk to you and really listen (Jas 1:19, 20) to determine suicidal intent. The more detailed their plan and the more access they have to their method of choice, the more likely they will follow through. Be compassionate as you hear their pain and suffering (Lam 3:22-24). Remember suicide is not so much about wanting to die as it is not knowing how to live with the problem. So they must gain a sense of hope, a reason to live, a hope that there is a solution to what to them seems unsolvable (1Cor 10:13). If you don't know how to help them, take them to someone who can help find that solution.

The book of Ecclesiastes shows us that life apart of God is not worth living. They must ultimately come to a place of trusting Christ as their personal savior and starting to grow in their trusting God's Word for answers to their life problems. Help them see that suffering is a part of God's will to refine us in Christ, with the goal to change their focus from escape to contentment (Php 4:11-13). As they begin to change they will find their place of service among God's people, helping others to realize that suicide is the ultimate act of self-love to avoid painful consequences (2Tim 3:1-2) and sharing the hope they have found in Christ.

Must I get involved?

Talking to someone about their suicidal intent will not encourage them to attempt suicide. Instead, it typically communicates interest and hope because you cared enough to ask. Jesus commanded us to get involved with our neighbors (Lk 10:25-37, Mt 22:36-40) and to restore a struggling brother to usefulness (Gal 6:1-5). Trust God to use you as His Instrument of Hope to someone who needs help!

As righteousness leads to life, so he who pursues evil pursues it to his own death.
- Prov 11:19

For The Warning Signs and Risk Assessment tools, [click here](#), and [click here](#), for the PDFs

Biblical Counseling Center

[Main Office](#) • 3233 N Arlington Heights Rd, Suite 302 Arlington Heights, IL 60004

[Scherverville Office](#) • 833 W Lincoln Hwy, Suite 115W Scherverville, Indiana 46375

[Fox Lake Office](#) • Fox Lake Community Church, 25 W Big Hollow Road Fox lake, Illinois 60020

Email info@biblicalcounselingcenter.org • Telephone (847) 398-7193

Copyright Biblical Counseling Center © 2010

Permission is granted to reproduce and distribute, in PDF format or paper copies for a group, in its original form.