

# SOS

## Signs of Suicide<sup>®</sup>



*High School  
Newsletter*

**SOME  
SECRETS  
SHOULD BE  
SHARED**

## Get Into the

# ACT<sup>®</sup>

*Acknowledge  
Care  
Tell*

Being in high school can be exciting, but it can also feel overwhelming. The expectations of your parents, the demands of your academics, the pressure to compete, the complications of your relationships; all this can make getting through even one day feel like a struggle. With all that is going on, it's normal to feel down or discouraged at times.

But what about those times when a friend seems down for weeks, or your own sadness or lack of energy is seriously affecting your life? Should you keep your friend's situation a secret if they ask you to? Should you keep your own unhappiness to yourself?

Now is the time to ACT and get help! Depression is a secret that should be shared.



## FIGHT AGAINST CYBERBULLYING

Within seconds, what you thought was a private email to your boyfriend is now all over Facebook. It was just a game, but now there's a video of you and your friend making a fool of yourselves on YouTube.

Social media makes it easy to connect with others, but sometimes things that were meant for your eyes and ears only grab the attention of everyone because it's on the internet. The truth is that cyber-bullying hurts and often lasts longer than a snide remark made during class or a mean joke at the lunch table.

With everyone able to text, tweet and take pictures and video instantly, it appears as if there's no such thing as a private conversation anymore. Take some simple steps to protect yourself and your friends from falling victim to harassment online:

- Do not give out your passwords to anyone but a parent
- Block those who are giving you trouble
- Never post anything you would be embarrassed about later
- Keep all bullying remarks and show them to a parent or trusted adult

## SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF DEPRESSION

## How Do You Know When A Friend Needs Help?

### *What Depression Can Look Like...*

Your friend has not been himself lately. He's been skipping practice. He's missing classes and he's been partying a lot. He's not returning your emails or texts and he shut down his Facebook page. You know that something is wrong, but what can you do about it?

Lately, your sister hasn't been doing her homework and has started blowing off her classes. You see her in the morning, but then she doesn't come home until dinnertime or much later. She stole money from you and you saw her going through your mom's purse. When you tried to talk to her, she just got angry. What can you do?

### *Symptoms of Depression (Lasting for two weeks or more)*

- Changes in mood such as becoming irritable, angry or withdrawn
- Changes in behavior such as getting behind in school or not wanting to be with friends
- Drug and alcohol use or abuse
- Loss of interest in once enjoyable activities
- Excessive sleeping or insomnia
- Change in eating habits
- Criminal behavior, like shoplifting
- Fixation with death, suicidal thoughts

If you have seen a friend showing these signs and you are worried about them, it's time to ACT and tell a trusted adult.

# 5 SELF-INJURY MYTHS DEBUNKED

If you don't fully understand self-injury, you're not alone. Self-injury is when people intentionally hurt their bodies in order to reduce or express serious distress. Those who struggle with self-injury come from all backgrounds: guy or girl, rich or poor, and all races.

*Self-injury is a suicide attempt gone wrong.*

**Not True:** People who self-injure are usually not attempting suicide. Suicide is when someone intentionally ends his or her life, while self-injury is typically used as an unhealthy method of coping.

*The wound isn't "that bad," therefore the problem isn't "that serious."*

**Wrong:** The severity of someone's self-inflicted injury doesn't represent the seriousness of the person's emotional problems or the intensity of their distress.

*People who self-harm are just trying to get attention.*

**False:** Self-injurers may NEED attention but they aren't hurting themselves FOR attention. In fact, most people who self-injure try to hide their wounds and scars.

*Only teenage girls self-injure.*

**Nope:** We all struggle with difficult situations. ANYONE can feel out of control from time to time and not know how to cope in a healthy way.

*Self-inflicted violence is just an attempt to manipulate others.*

**Not always:** Some people use self-inflicted injuries as a way to cause others to behave in certain ways, but most don't. If you think someone is trying to manipulate you with self-injury and you are worried about their safety, it's time to ACT and tell a trusted adult.

## DOES THIS PICTURE LOOK FAMILIAR?

If you've been a witness to bullying and felt powerless, read on to learn some steps you can take to stand up against bullying in your school:

- If you know someone who is a target for bullies at your school, keep them company; on the bus, at lunch, in the halls—most bullying takes place when the victim is alone.
- Don't fuel the bully's actions by laughing—a bully who fails to get a rise from others will often stop.
- Report the incident, even if it is anonymously—you can help the situation!
- Remember, if you know someone that is being bullied and you are worried about the person's safety, it's time to ACT and tell a trusted adult.







Dear SOS,  
I'm being bullied at school for being gay. Will my life always be this way, or do things actually get better?  
-Chris

Dear Chris,

The teen years for many gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender or questioning youth are often the most difficult of their lives. Bullying, coming out issues and gender nonconformity, combined with other stressors are extremely tough to deal with. But life will get better! LGBTQ youth DO have promising futures and the opportunity to develop loving relationships, families and successful careers. Want proof? Visit the It Gets Better Project™ at [www.ItGetsBetter.org](http://www.ItGetsBetter.org)

Also, the Trevor Project operates The Trevor Helpline, which is a free and confidential service that offers 24 hour/day phone support for LGBTQ youth. Help is just a phone call away at [866-4-U-TREVOR](tel:866-4-U-TREVOR).



Dear SOS,

I don't know what's going on with me. My grades are dropping, I can't concentrate...I just don't want to live anymore. Who can I turn to? Is it even worth it?  
-Ang

Dear Ang,

It is important that you take these feelings seriously and tell a trusted adult. Do you have a favorite teacher or coach that is easy to talk to? Are you close with a parent or relative in your family? If you feel like you can't reach out to a school professional or other adult, call the Lifeline at [1-800-237-TALK](tel:1-800-237-TALK). They are available to talk 24 hours a day, every day, and can help if you are having trouble with your parents or your friends, or if you are just feeling down. And remember, you are always worth it—seek help.



# BUILD RESILIENCE

You're Stronger Than You Think!

*Resilience is the positive capacity of people to recover from stress and adversity*

## MAKE CONNECTIONS *(focus outward)*

Good relationships with family members, friends and others are important. Being active in school groups, faith-based organizations or other local groups provides social support and can help with reclaiming hope. Helping others in their time of need can also benefit you.

## ACCEPT THAT CHANGE IS A PART OF LIFE *(stuff happens)*

Didn't make the varsity team? SAT scores aren't cutting it for your top college pick? Certain goals may be out of reach due to a variety of reasons and adverse situations. Accepting circumstances that cannot be changed can help you focus on circumstances that you can alter.

## MOVE TOWARD YOUR GOALS *(baby steps count)*

Develop some realistic goals. Do something regularly—even if it seems like a small accomplishment—that helps you to move toward your goals. Ask yourself, "What's one thing I know I can accomplish today that helps me move in the direction I want to go in?"

## TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF *(mind and body)*

Keep your mind and body in tip-top shape. Exercise your mind by paying attention to your own needs and feelings. Exercise regularly. If your mind and body are in good shape, you'll be better off when dealing with situations that require resilience.

## LOOK FOR OPPORTUNITIES FOR SELF DISCOVERY *(gain something from loss)*

We all experience loss and although it can be hard to imagine, positive growth can come from tough times. Many people who have experienced tragedies eventually report better relationships, a greater sense of personal strength, an increased sense of self-worth and a heightened appreciation for life.