



Talking Points When Working with Kids and Teens

GOOD SKILLS TO USE

BE...

A good LISTENER

A good OBSERVER

Direct

Persistent

Prepared

Open

Non-judgmental

Calm and Comfortable

Caring / Empathic

Positive

BUILD A STRONG THERAPEUTIC BOND!!

When Discussing Self-Harm

- Calm the crisis situation by remaining calm and expressing empathy.
- Discuss methods for coping that do not include self-harm.
- Always communicate your support and willingness to help the student.

THINGS NOT TO DO:

- ⊙ DO NOT encourage guilt.
- ⊙ DO NOT be shocked.
- ⊙ DO NOT threaten to punish the student.
- ⊙ DO NOT tell the student he/she is just doing it for attention.
- ⊙ DO NOT try to physically take away a weapon - always enlist the help of professions.
- ⊙ DO NOT minimize the problem.

KEY MESSAGES

- ❖ Take every threat and act **SERIOUSLY**.
- ❖ Be prepared to **ACT** and **INTERVENE**.
- ❖ It should never be a bother to deal with self-injurious behavior.
- ❖ How the teen perceives the event or situations is crucial!
- ❖ Know your limits and collaborate/consult with colleagues.
- ❖ For suicide, **ALWAYS** assess for a **plan, intent, and means/access**.
- ❖ Take time to care for your own needs and process the event/situation.

WHEN DISCUSSING SUICIDALITY

- Don't leave the student alone
- Contact parents
- Create a suicide contract
- If the student continues to threaten suicide after contracting:
HOSPITALIZATION
 - Psychiatric Emergency Team (PET)
 - "5150" Emergency Psychiatric Hold
- Communicate that student is not alone
- Proceed slowly – don't ask too many questions or push the student beyond his/her comfort level.
- Be positive
- Clarify the permanence of death
- Emphasize alternatives