

## Talking With Your Teen/Youth



Parents CAN make a difference!\*

Talk to your kids to establish that they can talk to you, and to establish a baseline of their knowledge and understanding

- ⌘ You already teach them lifeskills and they are accustomed to learning from you
- ⌘ Talking about suicide won't plant the idea
- ⌘ *If you don't talk to them and teach them, who will?*

*WHY is that important to us?* Because teens/youth are faced with this issue right now, some every day, when worried about friends, loved ones, family and/or themselves. They need to know what to do; how to ask for help *and* how to respond. It can help save lives, and it can help alleviate the guilt of "I didn't know what to do" or guilt of 'not doing anything'.



### Preparation Steps before you talk...

- ⌘ Identify your resources, and Identify a buddy you can call
- ⌘ Remember to say the "S" word
- ⌘ Choose an appropriate time to talk with them

*Experts tell us to say "suicide" not just 'you can talk to me about anything', be specific, and tell them "you can talk to me about suicide and suicide prevention". It lets them know you are willing to talk about the subject.*

## 1. How to Talk With Your Teen/Youth



- ◆ Take time to listen between each of your following questions.
- ◆ Show them the Ask4Help!® Card and ask them if they know about the YR program. (This is the conversation starter).
- ◆ Ask if they know anyone who has talked of or attempted suicide.\*\*
- ◆ Ask if they have ever thought of suicide? And ask what you can do to help; let them know you are with them.

## 2. How to Respond to A Cry for Help



### Have a caring conversation (Not a clinical assessment)

- ⌘ Breathe! Catch your breath! Be genuine, caring, and show respect.
- ⌘ Don't lie or make promises you can't keep.
- ⌘ Tell them you're glad they came to you. Ask them, what's happening, and how can you help. Be sure to let them know you will help be a link and get someone to help, that you care.

Once things settle down in the conversation, it's ok to ask what are some reasons for them to live. Or what they would like to do once they get through this bump in their life. Ask what they like to do and/or are good at? ✦ Youth who identify and explore at least 3 protective factors, reasons for living, have been linked to reducing the risk of suicide attempts by 70%/80% (Borowsky, Ireland & Resnick 2001)

## 3. Continued Prevention Is Protective/Proactive

- Talk about suicide and suicide prevention
- Wear, use & display Yellow Ribbon symbol (the ♥ is for survivors)
- Participate in annual Yellow Ribbon prevention activities
- Keep a supply of cards and other materials available
- Be an education resource - teach and train suicide prevention
- Use 800-273-TALK (8255)

*A barrier to getting help is to be able to ask for help, the Yellow Ribbon Ask4Help Cards can **Start the Conversation!***

\* KIDS COUNT®, a project of the Annie E. Casey Foundation

\*\* 91% of teenagers surveyed indicated they would first tell a friend of their suicidal thoughts. (Ross, 1985)