the emotionally naked® speaker


Gatekeeper Training

- safeTALK Training http://safetalktraining.com
- ASIST Training (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training) - 2-day program https://www.livingworks.net/asist
- The ASK Workshop, Lifeline Workshops: https://www.lifelineworkshops.com/the-ask-workshop
- CALM training: https://www.sprc.org/resources-programs/calm-counseling-access-lethal-means

Signs of Suicide:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>What do they say?</th>
<th>How they behave?</th>
<th>What is their mood?</th>
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<tr>
<td>“I just want to die.”</td>
<td>Isolate and withdraw (a.k.a. ghosting)</td>
<td>Depressed</td>
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<td>“I can’t do this anymore.”</td>
<td>Drink or drug too much</td>
<td>Anxious</td>
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<tr>
<td>“I don’t want to live.”</td>
<td>Looking for ways to end their life including online searches</td>
<td>Irritable and Angry</td>
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<td>“I feel so worthless.”</td>
<td>Sleep too much or not enough</td>
<td>Loss of interest</td>
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<td>“No one would care if I was dead.”</td>
<td>Visit or call people to say goodbye</td>
<td>Humiliated shame</td>
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<td>“I’m such a burden.”</td>
<td>Give away prized possessions</td>
<td>Relief and sudden improvement</td>
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<td>“I feel trapped.”</td>
<td>Anger easily or become aggressive</td>
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<tr>
<td>“This pain has to stop.”</td>
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</tbody>
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Source: American Foundation of Suicide Prevention

Question to ask

Older children

“Are you thinking of suicide?”

Younger children

“Are you thinking of making yourself dead?”

Podcasts for Therapists related to Suicide Prevention

- Hope Illuminated with Sally Spencer-Thomas, https://www.sallyspencerthomas.com/hope-illuminated-podcast

Specific Podcast Episodes

Case Studies with Sample Conversations:

**Sebastian. 8, 3rd grade**

**What’s happening in his life?** His parents seem to be having marital issues and he’s a sensitive child

**What’s going on at school?** Has been more withdrawn, he gets angry/frustrated very quickly, he’s made remarks indicating low self esteem

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Therapist: “Sebastian. I have noticed you seem very sad. Do you want to talk about it?”

**Sebastian:** “Nobody likes me.”

Therapist: “Tell me why you think that.”

**Sebastian:** “I’m so ugly and stupid.”

Therapist: “I’m sorry you feel so bad about yourself. What do you think about when you are sad?”

**Sebastian:** “I think about being with grandma in heaven.”

Therapist: “I see. So, are you thinking about making yourself dead?”

**Sebastian:** “Yes. I would hold my breath until I was dead.”

Therapist: “You must feel really bad. Do you know what happens when someone dies?”

**Sebastian:** “They go to heaven where it’s very beautiful.”

Therapist: “When someone dies, their heart stops beating, they stop breathing, & they can’t move again. Have you ever seen a dead animal?”

**Sebastian:** “I saw a dead cat in our road. It was all smushed....”

Therapist: “I have seen that, too. It sometimes makes me sad to see a dead animal. What about you?”

**Sebastian:** “Me, too.”

Therapist: “What are the people, pets or things that are important to you?”

**Sebastian:** “My dog. When I am sad, he cuddles up against me.”

Therapist: “I bet that feels really good. If you died, what would happen to him?”

**Sebastian:** “I don’t know. I think my daddy would take care of him.”

Therapist: “I see. Do you think your dog would miss you?”

**Sebastian:** “I think so. He loves me. I know he does.”

Therapist: “So, he doesn’t hate you. And I don’t hate you. Thank you for talking with me and being really honest.”
Case study: Casey, 12, 7th grade

What’s happening in her life? Lost a brother to a car accident, Mother has just been diagnosed w/ breast cancer

What’s going on at school? Her grades have dropped, more detached. Prior to her brother’s death she was more engaged, She wrote a paper about a girl who tried to jump from the balcony of her aunt’s apartment (When we speak to the parent, we need to specifically mention this so the aunt can be warned and make sure the child is safe from suicide.)

How do we find out if Casey is thinking of suicide?

Therapist: What’s up with you this week?

Casey: Ummmm. Well, you know my brother was killed last year in a car accident and I. . .and then my mom got cancer and I just . . .

Therapist: Well, I knew about your brother because that’s why you are here. I didn’t know about your mom. I’m so sorry. Keep talking.

Casey: I just feel . . .I mean I can’t concentrate, and I don’t think I can do this anymore. I mean, I don’t know . . .

Therapist: What do you mean you can’t do this anymore? Can you explain?

Casey: Yeah, like I don’t care anymore or don’t want to be here anymore. Everything is hard. Just getting out of bed is hard. I don’t care about anything. . . .It feels dark.

Therapist: I will need to ask you a specific question because many times when someone is going through all you are going through, and they say, “I can’t do this anymore,” they are struggling with thoughts of suicide? Are you thinking about suicide?

Casey: Ummmm. . .I think. I mean I don’t know. I have these dark periods and then they just go away and then I don’t want to hurt myself and I feel fine. But sometimes I do want to and I don’t feel like I have control, especially late at night when I can’t sleep.

My mom and dad would be devastated. I don’t want to tell them because my parents are so worried about mom’s cancer and then my brother. My dad has a shotgun and I have thought about it would make the pain just stop. It won’t stop sometimes. . . .

Therapist: This is serious. First, I’m honored and grateful you trust me with this. I also know what courage it took to come tell me all you have. And to trust me with this. Thank you.

Casey: You don’t think I’m weak?

Therapist: Not at all. It’s so brave. People don’t understand how hard it is to tell. Let’s you and me talk about next steps because we need to make sure you are safe from suicide. Let’s do that now together. Does that sound OK?

Casey: Will you tell my parents? They just can’t handle this right now.

Therapist: Your parents would not want to lose you. We can agree on that, right? We are not going to keep secrets but share with you and them the next steps.

Casey: They might be really upset or disappointed or say that I’m just trying to get attention.
Therapist: My main concern is your safety and your life. Anyone who is having thoughts of suicide means that something is gravely wrong and it’s a situation that needs immediate attention. We will work through this together.

Casey: Will you call an ambulance or anything like that?

Therapist: We are not calling an ambulance right now. No limbs are falling off? You’re not having a heart attack? So we don’t need an ambulance. I’m with you on this, OK? After we get an assessment for suicide risk and a safety plan, we can talk to your parents.

Casey: OK. But I do feel better today. . . . I mean it probably won’t come back.

Therapist: You may be right. But let’s be sure. I know it took courage to tell. No secrets. Are you with me?

Casey: Yeah. I trust you. I do.

Important! Talk to parents about removing means from the household including any suggestions of a biometric safe (thumbprint safe) for any firearms in the home.

**Signs of Possible Suicide Risk in Artwork**

| Child far from the family | Child is faceless | Draws pictures of themselves drowning or dying |

**Questions to ask:**

- “Tell me about your picture. Why is the boy so far away?”
- “Tell me about your picture. Why is the boy without a face?”
- “You mentioned you felt sad. Were you feeling sad when you drew this picture?”

**What to do if you suspect a child is thinking of suicide:**

1. Engage in a private conversation
   “Andres, you said unhappy thoughts could cause a person to die. Do you have unhappy thoughts?”, “Tell me more about how you feel.” “How long have you felt this way?”

2. Listen with empathy, w/out “fixing.” Meet the person where they are...

3. Ask the Question- “Are you thinking of suicide?” or “Are you thinking of making yourself dead?”

4. Do a risk assessment, create a safety plan
Tools

1. **Tools: ASQ 4/5-Question Suicide Screening Tool NIMH** - This kit also has scripts for clinicians.
2. **Stanley Brown Safety Template**
3. **Columbia Suicide Severity Rating Scale (C-SSRS)**
4. **Screening for and Assessing Suicide Risk** – From Zero Suicide

When are youth most at risk?

(Suicide is never the result of just one risk factor but a constellation of risk factors that converge at once.) These times make youth more at risk and can act as “the last straw”

- **During Transitions and Mini Transitions** e.g., Elementary school to middle school, middle to high, high to college. Back to school, from school to winter break or spring break, moving, deployment of a parent, any other major changes
- **After a Relationship Disruption** e.g., fights (friend, bf, parent, sibling), parent divorce, romantic breakups, grief/loss including pets
Articles

- What does a school counselor say to a parent who refuses to support a suicidal child?

- A friend posted a message online that sounds suicidal. What do you do or say?
  https://annemoss.com/2021/09/19/a-friend-posted-a-message-online-that-sounds-suicidal-what-do-you-do-or-say/

- What to say to someone who tells you they are cutting

- Self-Harm Safety Box
  https://annemoss.com/2016/08/03/self-harm-safety-box/

- ‘My son has admitted he is suicidal. What do I do now?’ [Helpful for parents]
  https://annemoss.com/2019/04/20/my-son-has-admitted-he-is-suicidal-what-do-i-do-now/

- How to Tell Your Parents You Want to Die
  https://themighty.com/2016/12/how-to-tell-your-parents-you-want-to-die/

EDUCATOR ARTICLES

- Support Students Grieving a Suicide Loss- 7 Important Strategies for Educators
  https://richmondfamilymagazine.com/article/support-students-grieving-a-suicide-loss/

- Scripts on how teachers facilitate discussion with their class after a suicide
  https://annemoss.com/2020/10/04/scripts-on-how-teachers-facilitate-discussion-with-their-class-after-a-suicide/

SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES

- NAMI Family Support Groups

- Families Anonymous

EVIDENCE-BASED SUICIDE PREVENTION PROGRAMS FOR SCHOOLS

- JED High School
  https://jedfoundation.org/our-work/jed-high-school/

- Sources of Strength
  https://sourcesofstrength.org/

- SOS Signs of Suicide
  https://sossignsofsuicide.org/parent/signs-suicide-program

SUICIDE PREVENTION RESOURCES FOR SCHOOLS

- After a Suicide: A Toolkit for Schools- Second Edition
  https://www.sprc.org/sites/default/files/resource-program/AfteraSuicideToolkitforSchools.pdf

- Model School Policy on Suicide Prevention: Model Language, Commentary, and Resources
## Resources

[https://annemoss.com/resources-2/](https://annemoss.com/resources-2/)

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<th>Book Title</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Free:</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>Diary of a Broken Mind: A Mother’s Story, a Son’s Suicide and the Haunting Lyrics He Left Behind</td>
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<td>9 ways to Help Kids Build Resilience</td>
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<td>Emotionally Naked: A Teacher’s Guide to Preventing Suicide and Recognizing Students at Risk</td>
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<td>25 Mindfulness &amp; Discovery Activities</td>
<td>Ideal teen activators for classrooms and youth groups</td>
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<td>FREE: Coping Strategies for Grief &amp; Loss</td>
<td>Comes w/ worksheets</td>
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<td>FREE: Signs of Drug Use</td>
<td>Are they using drugs? Find out the signs &amp; which one it might be.</td>
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<td>FREE: Grief Journey in a Jar Kit</td>
<td>Once-a-day inspiration for a parent who has lost a child</td>
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<td>FREE: Fishbowl Game Activator Game</td>
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**emotionallynaked.com articles:**

- A friend posted a message online that sounds suicidal. What do you do/say?
- How to tell someone I want to kill myself
- What to say to someone who tells you they are cutting
- 'My son has admitted he is suicidal. What do I do now?'
- The Self-Harm Safety Box
- When ghosting is a sign of suicide or relapse

**Free:** Get the whole eBook Library in one email!

**Anne Moss’s one sheet** that includes keynote presentations, student coping skills workshops, PD, training topics