Suicide in Elementary Aged Children (5-11)

Did you know that suicide occurs with all ages, even elementary age children?

STATISTICS

In 2014, the CDC ranked suicide as the 10th cause of death for US elementary school-aged children. Suicide occurs at a rate of 0.17 per 100,000 persons in youth between the ages of 5 and 11 years, in contrast to a rate of 5.18 per 100,000 among adolescents aged 12 to 17 years (Sheftall et al., 2016).

-In a study gathering data from Emergency Room Department visits found in the National Hospital Ambulatory Medical Care Survey (NHAMCS) ED database from 2007 to 2015, it was found there were 59,921 unweighted ED visits for children younger than 18 years in the NHAMCS, among which 1,613 met the inclusion criteria for visits due to suicide attempts or suicide ideation. Also of note, 43.1% of suicide attempt or suicidal ideation visits were for children aged 5 to younger than 11 years and only 2.1% were hospitalized (Burstein et al., 2019).

CRISIS LINES:

National Suicide Prevention Hotline: 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

Georgia Crisis & Access Line: 1-800-715-4225

GMHCN Warm Line: 888-945-1414

CARES: 844-326-5400
- Call or Text 8:30AM-11:00PM for substance use Crisis Text Line: 741-741

Together, there is HOPE
**HOW? WHERE? WHY?**

A 2016 study by the Official Journal of the American Academy of Pediatrics found:
- Suicide by ages 5-11 often occurred by hanging, strangulation, or suffocation in their home
- Commonly experienced relationship problems with friends and family
- 1/3 of the sample experienced a type of mental health struggle, with the most common being ADHD (Sheftall et al., 2016).

**RISK FACTORS**

Risk Factors: “Emotional distress, exposure to violence, family conflict, relationship problems, lack of connectedness to school/sense of supportive school environment, alcohol and drug use, physical disabilities/learning differences, lack of access to resources/support” (Violence Prevention, 2018)

**HOW TO HELP EDUCATORS**

- Talk with the student and let them know you care
- Incorporate lessons on social skills and problem solving in the classroom
- Help the student partner or play with supportive peers
- Collaborate with parents/guardians and the school counselor to provide extra support for the student
- Create a supportive and welcoming classroom (Violence Prevention, 2018)

**HOW TO HELP PARENTS / GUARDIANS**

- Talk with your child and let them know you care
- Be observant of behavior/mood changes
- Talk with your pediatrician yearly for early screenings of suicide
- Identify your child’s strengths
- Take your child for a walk or to play with other neighborhood children
- Play, read, watch a movie, listen to music, or do crafts with your child
- Ensure that your child is eating nutritious meals, getting adequate exercise, and sleeping well
- Monitor your child’s intake of news, social media, TV, newspapers, and other media or conversations that can increase stress by communicating about disasters or traumatic current events
- Obtain extra support from local mental health professionals and the school counselor for your child (Violence Prevention, 2018)

**RESOURCES**

- **Georgia HOPE**
  - Call: 706-279-0405 Ext. 149
  - Text: 706-847-4871
  - Email: info@gahope.org
  - Visit: GaHOPE.org

- American Foundation for Suicide Preventions: https://afsp.org/

- Suicide Prevention Resource Center: https://www.sprc.org/populations

**REFERENCES**


