

Myths vs. Facts

- **Myth:** Being depressed means you are either weak or "crazy".
- **Fact:** Depression is a serious but treatable mental illness. People don't choose to have it. It happens as a result of life circumstances, chemical imbalances, or both.

- **Myth:** Depression and other mental disorders do not happen in children
- **Fact:** Children as young as 8 or 9 can suffer from severe depression. Early warning signs have been tracked in children as young as pre-school age. Depression is an epidemic among teenagers.

- **Myth:** There is a certain type of person who gets depressed or suicidal.
- **Fact:** Depression and suicide sees no ethnic background, no gender, no faith, no economic standing, no sexual orientation, and no cultural boundaries. They can affect everybody.

- **Myth:** All suicides are preventable.
- **Fact:** Most suicides are deliberately thought out in advance. Young people, however, can be extremely impulsive. Even with the greatest prevention efforts and support network, a young person can make an impulsive decision in a moment of pain.

- **Myth:** Talking to a student about suicide will put the idea in their head and could cause them to attempt suicide.
- **Fact:** Young people are going to think about suicide whether we talk about it or not. Someone who is suicidal will actually be relieved that you brought it up and made it okay for them to talk. Talking about it can diffuse their intentions.

- **Myth:** Suicide happens without warning signs.
- **Fact:** In 80 to 90% of youth suicide attempts, warning signs were evident in advance. People just need to know what to look for.

- **Myth:** Suicidal people really want to die.
- **Fact:** Suicidal people don't want to die, they just don't want to hurt anymore. They need to be given hope and options about other ways to deal with their pain.

- **Myth:** People who talk about suicide don't kill themselves. They are only trying to get attention or manipulate others.
- **Fact:** Almost all students who attempt suicide will talk to somebody about it right before the attempt. This is too serious an issue to ever assume that somebody is just trying to get attention. If someone is talking about suicide, always take them seriously. ALWAYS.

- **Myth:** Suicide is a very personal decision and family history has no bearing on that choice.
- **Fact:** A student who has an immediate family member that has attempted or completed suicide is at a higher risk for a suicide attempt. Our family is our biggest role models. Our family is where we learn acceptable behavior.

- **Myth:** A person who is suicidal will always be suicidal
- **Fact:** Suicidal thoughts and feelings usually only last for a short season of time. If the depression or circumstances they are related to can be dealt with, the thoughts and feelings will go away.

- **Myth:** A young person will "learn" from their mistakes after a suicide attempt and will not attempt again
- **Fact:** Young people who attempt suicide are at a higher risk for another attempt than those who have not attempted. The student who has attempted suicide needs to deal with the depression or circumstances that caused the first attempt.