

*Patient Education Sheet***Suicide and What You Can Do****What do I do if someone I know appears suicidal?**

When someone you know appears suicidal or expresses wanting to die, you may not know how to get the needed help. Hearing someone talk about suicide can be frightening and upsetting. You may feel that you want to help by getting the person to talk about his/her intentions, but you may also be fearful that you will make matters worse.

Most people express their suicidal thoughts and intentions before taking their life. Always take suicidal threats seriously. Anyone who talks of suicide needs immediate attention. Do not overlook them. Call another family member or friend who you think may support you in getting help and immediate attention for the suicidal person.

**Who is at high risk for suicide?**

Persons at higher risk for suicide are those who:

- Have previously attempted suicide
- Have a mental illness such as depression, bipolar disorder, or schizophrenia
- Abuse alcohol
- Have a family history of suicide
- Have a family history of violence, including sexual or physical abuse
- Have firearms in the home
- Have a very serious medical illness or was given the diagnosis of a terminal illness

**Are there signs and symptoms that are common with suicide?**

There are signs and symptoms that may accompany suicidal feelings, which may include:

- Feeling hopeless, that nothing will ever change or get better
- Feeling like a burden to family and/or friends
- Putting affairs in order, such as organizing finances, insurance policies, or giving away special possessions to prepare for one's death
- Using large amounts of drugs and alcohol
- Writing a suicide note
- Putting oneself in a situation that can result in death.
- Expressing suicidal feelings or thoughts

**Treat Suicide as an Emergency**

If you know someone who is suicidal, do not wait. Make sure that access to large amounts of medication, weapons, or other items such as ropes or chords, is prevented because they could be used for self harm. If you are feeling suicidal or know someone who is, call a doctor, or 9-1-1 or drive to an emergency room. Make sure that the suicidal person is not left alone. Should he/she wander off alone, call 9-1-1 and report what you know.

It may not be possible to prevent all suicides, but your active involvement may help save the life of someone you know or love.

Danbury has a Crisis Intervention Hotline phone number you can call--1-888-447-3339 in case of emergency needs or questions.

*Source:*

Mayo Clinic. (2009). What to do when someone is suicidal. Retrieved February 2009 from [www.mayoclinic.com/health/suicide/MH00058](http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/suicide/MH00058)

National Institute of Mental Health. Retrieved February 2009 from [www.nimh.nih.gov](http://www.nimh.nih.gov) 5/2013

*For more information, or to learn about the specialized services and programs available at Western Connecticut Health Network, please visit [www.WCHN.org](http://www.WCHN.org)*