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The  
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Fund

FOR STUDENTS, FAMILIES, AND EDUCATORS

# Suicide Prevention: What to Watch For and How to Take Action



Suicide remains a public health issue, especially among communities of color where suicide rates continue to rise. Suicide Prevention Month reminds us that there is no shame in seeking help for mental health concerns. While we may hear messages to stay “strong,” it is important to be honest with ourselves when we or people we care about are thinking in self-destructive ways.

## WARNING SIGNS: WHAT TO WATCH FOR

As a friend, family member, or educator, you may sense that something is “off” with yourself or with a young person of color in your life. If you are concerned that they are struggling and need support, consider these signs and signals, and take action. 1. Social withdrawal. Are they spending excessive time alone and missing school and social events? Do they not return calls and texts? 2. Irregular habits. Do you notice significant changes in eating or sleeping habits? Do you see drastic changes in behavior, such as excessive use of media, video games or screen time? Do you notice large changes in school performance? 3. Major changes in mood or behavior. Do you notice intense worry, overwhelming fear, increased hopelessness, anger, deep sadness, or extended irritability? 4. Risk-taking behaviors. Are you observing self-medicating behaviors with drugs or alcohol? Do you see evidence of self injury, such as cutting? Are they neglecting personal safety?

### HERE ARE SOME KEY WAYS TO PREVENT MONKEYPOX:

1. **Text STEVE** to 741741 and connect with a trained counselor 24/7.
2. **Call / Text 988** the [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](https://www.nationalsuicidepreventionlifeline.org/)
  - En Español: 1-888-628-9454
  - For the deaf and hard of hearing: Dial 711, then 1-800-273-8255.

### LGBTQIA+ & TRANS YOUTH RESOURCES

- **LGBTQIA+ youth** in crisis can call the Trevor Project crisis line at 866.488.7386. Visit [thetrevorproject.org/get-help](https://thetrevorproject.org/get-help) to learn more.
- **Trans Lifeline** can be reached at 877-565-8860. In Canada, call 877-330-6366.

Visit [stevelfund.org/youthhealingspace](https://www.stevelfund.org/youthhealingspace) for more tips, resources, and our BACK-TO-SCHOOL TOOLKIT.

## 5 Ways To Support A Friend, Your Young Person, or Student

1. **Take their concerns seriously.** Listen first to understand and acknowledge. Pause on sharing your point of view or trying to fix a problem.
2. **Validate their experience.** Ask open-ended questions, request clarification, and paraphrase what was said so they know you've heard them.
3. **Help them feel supported. Mirror feelings and validate what a young person is feeling.** Use positive body language (stay open, have a relaxed body posture). If relevant and applicable, share a similar experience you may have had.
4. **Give your full attention to their words and body language without judgment to deepen your understanding of their concerns.** Try not to interrupt and avoid giving advice.
5. **Offer help with time and practical support.** Offer to walk with them through the process of finding and seeking help from a therapist or online resource. Offer to help schedule an appointment or accompany them to their first session.

### About the Steve Fund

The Steve Fund is the nation's leading organization focused on supporting the mental health and emotional well-being of young people of color. We work with colleges and universities, nonprofits, researchers, mental health experts, families, and young people to promote programs and strategies that build understanding and assistance for the mental and emotional health of young people of color.