

## **Saving Lives in the Tri-State**

### **Facts about Suicide and Learning QPR for Suicide Reduction: Part 4 of a Series**

Over the course of this series we discussed the facts behind suicide and ways that you can ask the all important question of “are you suicidal?” It is important to directly ask a friend, co-worker, family member or anyone else you know this question to learn about their state of mind and true intentions.

You may also observe behavioral or situational clues that either the person has begun displaying or has happened to the individual. Some behavioral clues that individuals who are suicidal may display include but are not limited to:

- Acquiring a gun or stockpiling pills
- Putting personal affairs in order
- Giving away prized possession
- Having a sudden interest or disinterest in religion
- Drug or alcohol abuse or a relapse after a period of recovery
- Unexplained anger, aggression and irritability

Situational clues can consist of:

- Being fired or being expelled from school
- A recent unwanted move
- Loss of any major relationship
- Death of a spouse, child, or best friend, especially if by suicide
- Diagnosis of a serious or terminal illness
- Sudden unexpected loss of freedom/fear of punishment
- Anticipated loss of financial security
- Loss of a cherished therapist, counselor or teacher
- Fear of becoming a burden to others

Additional clues may include any previous suicide attempts or co-occurring depression, moodiness, or hopelessness. Behavioral clues may be harder to pick up on as you will have to have a history of knowing the person versus witnessing the above situational changes.

What happens next once you’ve asked a person if they are suicidal and they say “yes” or you have noticed some changes in their behavior or life? The next step is to persuade the person to seek help whether it is by talking with a family member, a friend, a church pastor, a mental health professional or anyone the person is comfortable talking with.

First and foremost, you want to ensure the person that you have their best interest at stake and you want them to stay alive. Be sure to listen to the problem and give the person your full attention; do not rush to judgment; offer hope in any form and remember that suicide is not the problem, only the solution to a perceived insoluble problem.

You’ll want to be direct with the person once you decide to persuade them to get help. Start by asking the person some of these questions: “will you go with me to get help?,” “will you let me help you get help?,” “will you promise me that you will not kill yourself and that you will stay safe until we find help?”

Providing a safe, kind and gentle support system for a person in need makes all the difference. You can help save a life if you are willing to dedicate time and effort to offering hope and help to a person who cannot find these things on their own.

If you or someone you know is in need of medical treatment for a mental illness or are having suicidal thoughts, please call our 24 hour emergency/suicide hotline at 812.423.7791. Also, if you know of an organization interested in saving lives from suicide, we offer a free one-hour course on QPR. Classes can be arranged by calling Becky Glines, communications director, at 812.436.4221.