

## TEENAGE SUICIDE

THEME: A Bad Solution to a Temporary Problem

### OPENERS:

1. Suicide: The intentional ending of one's life.
2. Suicide is a leading cause of death among adolescents.
3. Suicide is the third leading cause of death in the USAF. - Col Leibrecht
4. Each year about 5,000 adolescents commit suicide. - T. Barrett
5. Many reported accidental deaths may be suicides. - Patricia Henry
6. Thousands of young people attempt suicide, but fortunately, not all attempts are fatal.
7. Suicide is a serious problem among adolescents, but it's a problem that is preventable.
8. A suicide attempt is a cry for help.
9. Suicide may result from a combination of factors including: depression, family problems, pressure to succeed, poor self-esteem, or a significant loss. - Mary Cerney
10. Suicide usually doesn't happen without warning. Clues may include: a previous suicide attempt, verbal threats, changes in behavior, substance abuse, giving away special possessions, depression, problems in school, and sudden happiness after prolonged depression. - H. Hendlin
11. In 1994, the United States reported more suicides than homicides. - Newsweek
12. Suicide solves a temporary problem with a permanent solution.
13. Thinking about suicide doesn't mean you are abnormal or crazy.

### DISCUSSION PROBES:

1. How can you tell if someone is thinking about committing suicide?
2. Are there any situations in which suicide is acceptable?
3. Which experts would you turn to for professional help?
4. If the situation is critical, why should you call or go to a hospital emergency department?
5. Do you believe a suicide attempt is a cry for help? Why?
6. What should you do if you knew someone who was talking about suicide?
7. Why should all threats of suicide be taken seriously?

### CONCLUSIONS:

1. Suicide is often preventable.
2. Know the suicide risk factors and signs.
3. Do all you can to help someone who is thinking about suicide.
4. People who contemplate suicide may feel hopeless and depressed, but have not necessarily lost touch with reality.

5. People who commit suicide often talk about ending their lives before they actually do.
6. Suicide occurs among adolescents of all types-rich and poor, athletic and non-athletic, popular and unpopular, gay or straight.
7. The more detailed the person's suicide plans, the more quickly you should seek assistance and offer to go with the person for emergency professional help.
8. Remember you can not control what the person decides to do.

BRINGING IT HOME:

1. Encourage your CAP unit to have a mental health professional speak on suicide.
2. Know the suicide risk factors and signs.
3. Be a friend to those in trouble and help them find professional help.
4. Volunteer to work in a Veterans Affairs Medical Center or a similar agency that helps people in trouble.
5. Know the resources available that can help potential suicide victims.
6. Know the suicide prevention or crisis intervention emergency telephone numbers in your area.