IF YOU NOTICE ANY OF THESE WARNING SIGNS, TAKE ACTION!

Signs that a friend may be at risk include the following F-A-C-T-S:

- **FEELINGS** like expressing hopelessness about the future, seeming sad and unhappy, being anxious and worried, or getting angry and aggressive.
- **ACTIONS** like withdrawing from activities or friendships, doing risky, dangerous things like drinking & driving, or researching ways to die online.
- **CHANGES** in the normal mood and behavior of your friend. In some ways, this may be what is easiest for you to notice. If you observe changes that concern you, reach out to others in your friend's life (i.e., parents, caregivers, teachers, friends, religious leaders, etc.) to see if they've also noticed changes.
- **THREATS** are sometimes direct like "I'd rather be dead". They can also be vague like "I just don't care about anything anymore."
- **SITUATIONS** are events that can serve as triggers for the suicidal behavior. These can include things like getting into trouble at home or school or with the law, experiencing some type of loss or facing a life change that may be too overwhelming for your friend to deal with on their own.

SUICIDE IS PREVENTABLE.

By taking time to notice and reach out to someone you feel is at risk, **you** can be the beginning of a positive solution.

NEW YORK STATE | Office of Mental Health

Call or Text:

988 SUICIDE & CRISIS LIFELINE

CRISIS TEXT LINE

Text "GOT5" to 741-741

WHAT EVERY STUDENT NEEDS TO KNOW:

The Warning Signs of Suicide Risk

NEW YORK STATE | Office of Mental Health | SPC NY Suicide Prevention Center of New York State

www.PreventSuicideNY.org

Youth Suicide Prevention is Everyone's Business!

BE A GOOD FRIEND, ASK FOR HELP!

Do you know who the most important people in your school are? *Teachers? Administrators?*

Nope. The correct answer is you, the students.

Without you, there would be no need for teachers or administrators or even a school building. You usually know what's happening before the adults in your school. You've got your ear to the ground; you catch rumors, gossip, the buzz on social media and you're usually the first ones to know if a peer is in trouble.

Why is this such a big deal?

What you may not know is that a lot of kids struggle with feeling so down or sad that they sometimes aren't able to participate in normal activities. Some kids feel so bad that they think about suicide or even make a suicide attempt. Some kids actually take their own lives.

The reasons for suicide are complicated– a lot of things usually go wrong at the same time that make it hard for someone to think clearly. Depression may cloud their judgment and you may notice changes in their behavior or attitudes that concern you.

What you might be seeing are things that are recognized as **WARNING SIGNS** that may indicate that the person may be thinking about suicide.

Check out the back page of this pamphlet to see some of the other things that may signal that your friend is in trouble. They're organized under the word FACTS to make them easier to remember.

So if you notice any of these FACTS what do you do?

It's important to take your observations seriously. Don't ignore them or assume your friend is just being dramatic. If you notice any of these warning signs, you really need to tell an adult. What you see may be a signal that your friend is thinking about suicide and that's not something you can deal with on your own.

If your friend fell and broke their leg, for example, you'd get them to a doctor, wouldn't you? This situation is exactly the same– just because you can't see what's wrong doesn't mean your friend doesn't have a serious problem that's way beyond your ability to handle. Let your friend know you're worried about them and then ask a trusted adult for help. Being a good friend sometimes requires that you ask for help from someone else!

If your friend (or anybody for that matter) makes a direct suicide threat, you need to **IMMEDIATELY** go and tell an adult you trust. Trusted adults are the people you know have your back. They listen to you without being critical or making judgments; they make time for you and they treat you with respect. They're also good at taking action– not just talking about what needs to be done.

Who are your trusted adults?

They might include someone from school like a teacher or a coach, or someone from your church, neighborhood, or family. Whomever that person is, you need to share your worries about your friend and let them take action.

If you have* IMMEDIATE *concern for your friend's safety– before you speak with a trusted adult– call 911!

What do you do if you are having thoughts about suicide?

First, know that it is really brave to recognize that you are having suicidal thoughts. Next, do the same thing you would do for your friend– tell a trusted adult! Just as you can't help your friend by yourself, you need to ask for help too.

There are lots of resources and skilled professionals who can help figure out why you feel that your life may not be worth living. They will also be able to help you stop feeling that way. Suicide is not just a reaction to stress– something more serious is going on and it is important to get help as soon as you can!

If you are unsure of what to do?

There is a special hot-line you can call if you still feel unsure about what to do. You can call or text the **Suicide & Crisis Line at 988.**

You don't have to identify yourself if you'd rather stay anonymous. Someone who has special training in helping people who have questions or concerns about suicide will be available to speak with you.

Your reaction is critical in helping open the door to what might be life-saving interventions.

You may be the first person to notice when someone in your school is in trouble. All you need to do is pay attention to the **FACTS**, tell your trusted adult if you notice anything that worries you, then leave it up to them to follow-up. Check back with your friend to see how things are going. Friends ***can*** help friends get through hard times!