Statistics

- Suicide is the second leading cause of death on college campuses (CDC 2008).
- LGB youth are up to four times more likely to attempt suicide than their heterosexual peers (Massachusetts Youth Risk Survey 2007).
- More than 1/3 of LGB youth report having made a suicide attempt (D’Augelli AR – Clinical Child Psychiatry and Psychology 2002).
- Nearly half of young transgender people have seriously thought about taking their lives and one quarter report having made a suicide attempt (Grossman AH, D’Augelli AR – Suicide and Life Threatening Behavior 2007).
- Questioning youth who are less certain of their sexual orientation report even higher levels of substance abuse and depressed thoughts than their heterosexual or openly LGBT-identified peers (Poteat VP, Aragon SR, et al – Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology 2009).
- LGB youth who come from highly rejecting families are more than eight times likely to have attempted suicide than LGB peers who reported no or low levels of family rejection (Ryan C. Huebner D, et al – Peds 2009).
- LGB adolescents are 190% more likely to use drugs and alcohol than heterosexual teens (Marshal MP, Friedman MS, et al – Addiction 2008).

Suicide Ideation

The thinking of how to kill oneself; the thoughts can be fleeting, or may even include a detailed plan, but do not lead to the final act of committing suicide.

LGBTQ ≠ Suicide

A common misconception is that simply being LGBTQ leads to suicide ideation. Homophobia and heterosexism lead to many LGBTQ individuals feeling isolation and alienated from loved ones. It is this isolation and alienation that can lead to suicide ideation.
Warning Signs of Suicide

Often times, a suicidal person may indicate in some way that they plan to attempt suicide. Here are some warning signs you should know about:

- Increased isolation from family and friends.
- Alcohol or drug use increases.
- Expression of negative attitude toward self.
- Expression of hopelessness or helplessness.
- Change in regular behavior.
- Loss of interest in usual activities.
- Giving away valued possessions.
- Expression of a lack of future orientation (i.e. “it won’t matter soon anyway”)
- Expressing suicidal feelings.
- Describes a specific plan for suicide.
- History of suicide in the family.
- A person who has been extremely depressed in the past may be at an increased risk for suicide if the depression begins to cease, as they may now have the psychological energy to follow through on a suicidal ideation.

Refer the Person to Counseling If:
- The person has identifiable personal problems and using one or more ineffective strategies.
- The person is exhibiting several of the distress warning signs.
- The problem the person shares with you does not appear to be alleviated by your support.
- The problem has existed for an extended period of time and the person’s attempts to solve it have been unsuccessful.

When You Refer:
- Remind the person that counseling is confidential and that it can often help.
- Remind the person that recognizing a problem and reaching out for help is a strength, no a weakness.
- Call the referral agency yourself to get the name of a specific counselor for the person to call.
- Stay with the person to provide support when they make the contact with the agency.

And remember, take care of yourself. Helping someone who is suicidal is demanding, draining work. Seek support of friends or professional resources.
What You Can Do to Help

Do:
- Remain calm.
- Take the person seriously.
- Encourage frank and open discussion.
- Listen without moralizing or judging.
- Listen actively and acknowledge feelings.
- Acknowledge that a suicide threat or attempt is a plea for help.

Don’t:
- Minimize the situation or depth of feeling (e.g., don’t say, “Oh it will be much better tomorrow”).
- Be afraid to ask the person if they are so depressed or sad that they want to hurt themselves (asking about thoughts of suicide will not cause a person to be suicidal).
- Overcommit yourself and, therefore, not be able to deliver what you promise.
- Ignore your limitations.
- Feel obliged to find simple solutions.

CSUN Resources

University Counseling Services
www.csun.edu/counseling
818-677-2366 / 818-677-7834 TDD

CSUN Helpline
www.csun.edu/counseling
818-349-HELP
Sunday – Thursday
6pm – 12am
Friday and Saturday
7pm – 10pm

National Suicide Resources

The Trevor Project
www.thetrevorproject.org
LGBTQ Crisis Hotline
866-488-7386

Los Angeles Suicide Prevention Center
Preventsuicide.lacoe.edu/index.php
(800) 784 – 2433 / (877) 727 – 4747

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:
suicidepreventionlifeline.org
(800) 272-TALK

Sources: Trevor Project (www.thetrevorproject.org); CSUN University Counseling Services; with additions/modifications from CSUN Pride Center 8/05/2013