

MYTHS AND FACTS ABOUT SUICIDE

1. Youth who talk about suicide do not actually make attempts. (myth)
2. **Studies indicate that in eight of ten suicides which occur, they have been preceded by clear, definite warnings. (fact)**
3. Suicide is an impulsive action that happens without warning. (myth)
4. **Suicidal individuals often give numerous clues regarding their intentions. (fact)**
5. If you ask a youth about her suicidal intentions, you will encourage her to kill herself. (myth)
6. **Asking directly about the suicidal intent may act as a deterrent in suicidal behavior by permitting the youth to ventilate her pent-up emotions. (fact)**
7. Once a youth is suicidal, she will always be suicidal. (myth)
8. **The suicidal crisis usually lasts for a limited time period given the proper interventions and support. (fact)**
9. Children never commit suicide. (myth)
10. **Suicide is the eighth leading cause of death among children ages 5-14. (fact)**
11. Depression in children is quite rare, but is similar to depression in adults. (myth)
12. **Children frequently experience depression, but it is often masked in other behaviors. (fact)**
13. Suicidal youth are mentally ill. (myth)
14. **Youth who attempt or complete suicide are often reacting to intense stressors and emotions that are not necessarily indicative of mental illness. (fact)**
15. Suicide attempts are seldom repeated. (myth)
16. **Once an individual attempts suicide, the chances increase that another attempt will follow if no intervention occurs. (fact)**
17. Suicide is inherited. (myth)
18. **Suicide is an individual pattern, but it may run in families. In such cases, the suicidal youth may view suicide as an acceptable option. However, suicidal behavior is not genetically transmitted. (fact)**

MYTHS AND FACTS ABOUT SUICIDE (CONTINUED)

19. Improvement in a suicidal youth's mood means the danger is over. (myth)
- 20. The "improvement" may indicate a sense of relief in having found a solution. Many suicides occur within a three-month period that follows the onset of improvement. Even after an unsuccessful attempt, one must continue to assess the risk of future attempts. (fact)**
21. Nothing can be done about suicide. (myth)
- 22. Many youth are alive today because of suicide/crisis intervention.**