



Hello Pathfinder Families!

2017 has started out very busy! I am underway with a handful of groups, individual meetings, and a handful of classroom presentations. Additionally, we are looking ahead towards high school for the 8<sup>th</sup> graders. More on this in the next few months! 8<sup>th</sup> grade parents, please check the Hot Sheet, School Calendar, and emails from teachers regarding upcoming high school visitation and orientation nights.

While the start of the new year often is full of excitement and things to come, this time of year can be very difficult for students and families including families here at Pathfinder! I wanted to share some statistics, warning signs, and resources to help your child if you are concerned.

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*It's natural to feel sad, down, or discouraged at times, and you know your child the best. Trust your gut and take note if your child is acting different than their baseline. About 5% of the children and teens in the general population can be depressed at any given time (YSPP).*

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### **WHAT TO DO**

- ◇ Take child to their primary care physician to rule out any medical conditions that could impact mood and behavior.
- ◇ Connect your child with a counselor. Your insurance company often has a list of providers. Talk with other parents about their experiences. I can also help here at Pathfinder by making referrals. We most often refer to Southwest Youth and Family Services.
- ◇ Help your child to take care of themselves physically: eat healthy foods, get enough sleep, exercise, relax, noticing good things about life

### **WARNING SIGNS**

#### **Warning signs of child or teenage depression include:**

- Irritability/anger - sadness/hopelessness
- Loss of interest in activities - poor school performance
- Withdrawal from friends and family - changes in sleeping or eating habits
- tears/frequent crying - difficulty concentrating
- fatigue/lack of energy - Feelings of worthlessness/guilt
- restlessness/agitation - thoughts of death or suicide

#### **Warning signs of teen suicide include:**

- Previous suicide attempt
- Current talk of suicide or making a plan
- Strong wish to die or a preoccupation with death
- Giving away prized possessions
- Signs of depression, such as moodiness, hopelessness, withdrawal
- Increased alcohol and/or other drug use
- Hinting at not being around in the future or saying good-bye

These warning signs are especially noteworthy in light of:

- a recent death or suicide of a friend or family member
  - a recent break-up with a boyfriend or girlfriend, or conflict with parents
- news reports of other suicides by young people in the same school or community

Other key risk factors include:

- Readily accessible firearms
- Impulsiveness and taking unnecessary risks
- Lack of connection to family and friends (no one to talk to)

## Youth Suicide Prevention Program



W UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON



## RESOURCES

Fortunately, there are many resources to your child and your family experiencing suicidal thinking. Please see below.

### **Youth Suicide Prevention Program – Seattle, WA**

YSPP's mission is to reduce youth suicide attempts and deaths in Washington state. Provides free training, education, and resources for youth, schools and caregivers for preventing youth suicide. Their website is [www.yspp.org](http://www.yspp.org).

### **Teen Link:** <https://866teenlink.org>

Provides up to date information as well as teen operated crisis line – 1-866-TEENLINK (866-833-6546)  
\*Available 6-10pm (PST)

### **King County Crisis Clinic:**

This 24 hour, toll-free, telephone hotline provides immediate, confidential assistance to people in distress in the King County area. Call 1-866-4-CRISIS (1-866-427-4747) or 206-461-3222.

### **National Suicide Prevention Hotline:**

Provides 24 hour, toll-free, telephone support for anyone in suicidal crisis or emotional distress and provides information to locate crisis clinics and resources throughout the U.S. 1-888-628-9454

### **Forefront**

In collaboration with the University of Washington, Forefront promotes innovative approaches to suicide prevention through policy change, professional training, campus- and school-based interventions, media outreach and support for those affected by suicide.

As always, please feel free to contact me with any comments, questions, concerns, etc at 206-252-9744 or [eabuter@seattleschools.org](mailto:eabuter@seattleschools.org)

Thank you!

Emilie Buter  
School Counselor

### **What are we doing at Pathfinder:**

- ⇒ All staff attended a suicide training from Youth Suicide Prevention Program in early January.
- ⇒ We are updating protocols to best serve students at school who are at risk of hurting themselves.
- ⇒ King County Crisis Clinic's TeenLink will be presenting in each of the middle school home-rooms on January 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup>
- ⇒ A staff sponsored parent training will be offered at Pathfinder on **Thursday, March 23<sup>rd</sup> from 6:30-8:00pm.** Youth Suicide Prevention Program will facilitate the training.



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