

Brown County Schools Suicide Prevention Policy

Appendix J

MAKING MY HOME SAFER WHEN MY CHILD IS HAVING THOUGHTS OF SUICIDE

When a child or teen has thoughts of suicide (whether these thoughts are active or not) it's important to make your home a safer place:

Remove firearms and weapons

Make sure that there are no firearms, ammunition nor weapons in your home (or make sure they are stored in a securely locked firearms cabinet, and keep the keys with a trusted neighbor, colleague, or your workplace – somewhere your child cannot access them). In a crisis, you can also call your local station to see if they would store them for you temporarily.

Remove alcohol and any unused prescription drugs

Alcohol and prescription drugs are risk factors for suicide. These substances affect rational thinking and can make children and youth more impulsive. Remove alcohol from your home, or keep small amounts in a locked cabinet. Additionally, dispose of all unused prescription medication.

Current Medications (Both Over-the-Counter & Prescription)

Lock up all medications, even non-prescription ones (even Tylenol PM or Aspirin TM can be very dangerous overdoses).

People who are depressed often overdose on their depression medications. Fortunately, many newer medications for depression (Fluoxetine/Prozac TM Fluvoxamine/LuvxTM, Sertraline/ZoloftTM, Paroxetine/PaxilTM, Citalopram/CelexaTM) are much safer than the older medications, even in overdose. Ask your doctor to prescribe only safe amounts of medications. When you fill prescriptions, ask the pharmacist to dispense safe amounts. This makes it more difficult for your child or teen to overdose.

Supervise children and youth when they take medication.

Other Means

Remove any other means of suicide.

Remove or lock up cords, ropes, sharp knives, or other obvious means of self-harm.

Car Keys

Keep car keys hidden so youth can't use your car to hurt themselves.

High Risk Periods

During high risk periods (like holidays, anniversaries, or times when close supports are away), be extra cautious and on high alert:

- Check in often with your child or teen.
- Do not leave your child or teen alone for long periods. If you have to go out, take your youth with you. If you absolutely cannot get your youth to come along, then have someone stay with your child.

If your child is at immediate risk for suicide, or you are afraid for your child's immediate safety:

- Call 911 (or go straight to the emergency room) right away.
 - After you come home from the hospital, do not try to handle things alone. Make sure you have relatives or friends to talk to. Think about contacting a support group, counselor or therapist for yourself as well.