

Greenfield High School Statement for the Media- 11/25/2019

We are heartbroken that two students who attended Greenfield High School have died from suicide in the past 6 weeks. Our most heartfelt wishes for courage, support and healing go out to their families and friends during this most difficult time.

The school will be hosting two supportive meetings for parents and others in the community. Planned areas of focus for discussion include grief in teens, warning signs for suicide in youth, resources for students at risk, and next steps being taken by the school. Local experts on grief and suicide will be on hand to answer questions.

Meeting Location: Greenfield High School

Dates/Times: Monday November 25, 2019 from 7 PM-8:30 PM and

Tuesday December 3, 2019, 7 PM-8:30 PM

Updates on these same topics will be presented to Greenfield High School staff members at an all staff meeting on Wednesday November 27, 2019.

No media or reporters will be allowed in the school or on school grounds.

These meetings are only for our school community. Out of respect for the collective grief for the loss of our students, we want to maintain a confidential and comfortable setting where participants may express their sadness and concerns.

A meeting announcement has been sent to parents, who can contact Greenfield High School at 281-6200 for more information.

Trained crisis counselors have been available to meet with students and staff and will continue over the next few weeks as needed.

Resources

Media are urged to include the following information about helpful resources in every related news story:

Crisis Resources

- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1-800-273-8255
- Crisis Textline Text the word "Hopeline" to 741741
- Trevor Lifeline (LGBTQ crisis line) 1-866-488-7386
- Milwaukee County Behavioral Health Division
 - Crisis line 1-414-257-7222
 - Children's Mobile Crisis Team 1-414-266-2932

Information on Suicide

- Suicide is complicated and involves multiple risk factors. It is not simply the result of stress or difficult life circumstances. Many people who die by suicide have a mental health condition, the most common of which is depression.
- Mental health conditions and substance abuse problems are treatable.
- The best way to prevent suicide is through early detection, diagnosis, and treatment of depression and other mental health conditions, including substance abuse problems.

The following is a set of warning signs and steps to take that were developed specifically for youth.

Youth Warning Signs	What to Do
<p>Leaders in the suicide prevention field agree that the following warning signs indicate a young person may be at risk for suicide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Talking about or making plans for suicide• Expressing hopelessness about the future• Displaying severe/overwhelming emotional pain or distress	<p>If you notice any of these signs in a student, take these recommended steps right away:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Do not leave the student alone and unsupervised. Make sure the student is in a secure environment supervised by caring adults until he or she can be seen by the school or another mental health professional.2. Make sure the student is escorted to the school's or another mental health professional.3. Provide any additional information to the school's or another mental health professional who will assist with the assessment of the student.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Showing worrisome behavioral cues or marked changes in behavior, particularly in the presence of the warning signs above. Specifically, this includes significant:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Withdrawal from or change in social connections or situations○ Changes in sleep (increased or decreased)○ Anger or hostility that seems out of character or out of context○ Recent increased agitation or irritability	<p>What to Do</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Ask if the student is okay.2. Express your concern about what you are observing in his or her behavior.3. Listen attentively and nonjudgmentally.4. Ask the student if they are having thoughts of suicide or ending their life. If yes, involved a mental health professional as noted in box above.5. Reflect what the student shares and let the student know he or she has been heard.6. Tell the student that he or she is not alone.7. Let the student know there are treatments available that can help.8. If you or the student are concerned, guide him or her to additional professional help, or to call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, a 24-hour toll-free phone line for people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress: 1-800-273-TALK (8255).

Recommendations for Reporting on Suicide

Research has shown that graphic, sensationalized, or romanticized descriptions of suicide deaths in the news media can contribute to suicide contagion (i.e., copycat suicides), particularly among teenagers. Media are strongly encouraged to refer to the document [Recommendations for Reporting on Suicide](#).

Local Media Contact

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