



### Parents make a difference in preventing student athlete suicide

As a parent, you are an essential support for your child’s mental health, and sometimes also for their peers. Talking about emotional and mental health is not always easy. Student athletes push themselves to succeed and may not reach out when they need help for themselves or a teammate. Several recent student athlete deaths by suicide have raised local and national attention.

By recognizing the signs of suicide risk and knowing how to start a conversation about mental health and where to turn for help, you will have the power to help someone find their reasons for living.



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FOR MENTAL HEALTH

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# Take Action for Athlete Suicide Prevention



**CalMHSA**  
California Mental Health Services Authority



Funded by the counties through the voter-approved Mental Health Services Act (Prop 63).

# How to Take Action for Suicide Prevention



**Suicidal thoughts or actions are a sign of extreme distress and should never be ignored.**

**If you know your child, or one of their peers, are experiencing or talking about:**

- Wanting to stop living
- Not seeing reasons to live
- Feelings of guilt, shame, or being a burden to others
- Having a sense of emptiness, hopelessness, or being trapped
- Periods of extreme sadness, anxiety, agitation, or rage
- Unbearable emotional or physical pain

**Call or text 988, or chat at [988lifeline.org](https://www.988lifeline.org) to connect to help 24/7**

**Other warning signs can include:**

- Having a plan for self-harm
- Giving away important possessions
- Withdrawing from friends and family
- Sudden extreme mood changes
- Increased risk-taking, including abuse of alcohol or other drugs

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# How to start a potentially life-saving conversation about suicide

**If your child, or their teammate or friend, shows sign of emotional distress or thoughts of death by suicide, check in with them.**

**Here are some ways to get the conversation started** ▶

**Be Prepared:** Have a list of crisis resources on hand. Practice what you will say. And make sure you have enough time and a safe space to talk.

**Be Direct:** You can ask questions like:

- “I feel like you haven’t been yourself lately.”
- “Do you want to talk about anything?”
- “Have you been having a tough time recently?”
- “Are you thinking of hurting yourself?”
- “I’m here for you. You are not alone.”
- “Can you tell me how I can help?”

**Listen:** They may give you their own reasons why they are thinking about both living and or dying. Validate that they are considering both options and underscore that living is an option for them.

**Plan For Safety:** Ask if they have access to any lethal means (weapons, medications, etc.) and find help to safely remove them from the vicinity. Ask the student if they have a specific plan for ending their life, and if they feel they might act on it. If the answer to both is “yes,” seek immediate help. Stay with them, do not leave them alone.

**Get Help:** You are not alone in helping someone in crisis. There are many resources available to assess, treat and intervene. Call 988 for crisis counselors, and connections to intervention programs and more support available to you, as well as to the person experiencing the emotional crisis. The *Know The Signs* website ([SuicidalsPreventable.org](https://www.suicidalspreventable.org)) is also a great place to start.



You can also visit [TakeAction4MH.com](https://www.TakeAction4MH.com) to check in, learn more, and get support for your child’s mental health and the mental health of their peers and teammates. **We’re all on Team #TakeAction4MH**