



Preventing Youth Suicide

Clinician Guidance & Resources

There is a mental health crisis in adolescents in Illinois

- **Suicide rates are increasing**, especially among children aged 10 to 14 years old
- In Illinois, 8.4% of high school students **attempted suicide**
- **Suicide attempts involving a firearm are more often fatal** (91%) compared with those involving drug overdoses (23%).
- **Over 80% of child firearm suicides** involved a gun belonging to a family member.

As a Clinician, You Have the Opportunity to Intervene:

- **34% of youths >14 years** had contact with a healthcare provider in the week before their death.
- **38% of adolescents** had contact with a healthcare system within the 4 weeks before their death.
- **49% of youth** had visited an emergency department (ED) within the year before their death.
- **80% of adolescents** visited a healthcare provider within the year before their death.

ASK, OBSERVE, INTERVENE

Know The Warning Signs & Save a Life

It is more important than ever to screen pediatric patients between the ages of 12 and 18 for depression, anxiety, and suicide. About one in four children in the US live in a home with firearms, increasing the likelihood of lethality in a suicide attempt.

The AAP now recommends that pediatricians screen all youth aged 12 and older for suicide at least annually, using a validated, evidence-based screening tool for suicide risk.

Youth Suicide Screening Assessment Tools

Visit bit.ly/mh-tools for a comprehensive list of suicide screening tools and supporting materials.

Look for these warning signs:

- Talk about killing oneself
- Talk about feeling like a burden
- Talk about feeling hopeless
- Talk about having no reason to live
- Talk about feeling trapped
- Talk about unbearable pain
- Changes in mood
- Increased anger or rage
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Agitation
- Increased substance use
- Withdrawal from activities
- Isolating from family and friends
- Sleeping too much or too little
- Giving away possessions
- Making suicide plans
- Trying to gain access to lethal means

Educate Parents & Guardians on Firearm Safe Storage

Take a moment during your patient visit to ask the parent or guardian about firearms in the home. Stay friendly and approachable, and if the family does have firearms in the house, share the following storage tips:

ALWAYS:

- ✓ Store ammunition and firearms separately
- ✓ Store firearms unloaded
- ✓ Use trigger locks, cable gun locks, or a secure gun safe
- ✓ Keep location hidden from children



Additional Resources

Screening, Diagnosis, Treatment, and Referrals

Get more information on screening, diagnosis, treatment, and referrals for pediatric patients presenting with suicidal ideation.



Scan the QR Code or Visit bit.ly/youth-suicide-resources

Firearm Restraining Order (FRO)

Learn more about the Firearm Restraining Order (FRO) in Illinois and what you can do as a provider with our FRO Toolkit



Scan the QR Code or Visit bit.ly/il-fro

Social Media Outreach for Clinics

Reach your patients and their families on the go with easy-to-share social media posts about suicide prevention and firearm safety.



Scan the QR Code or Visit bit.ly/fro-outreach