

# The Tragedy of Child and Adolescent Suicide

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## Introduction

Each year in the United States, approximately 4,600 young people kill themselves. Fourteen percent of American high school students have thought about suicide, and 7 percent have attempted suicide during their high school years. Suicide is a complicated concept with many possible causes and contributing factors. The connection between depression and other mental health disorders is well known, but it is a myth to think that *all* suicides are related to depression or hopelessness, although some are. A further complicating factor is that many religions view suicide as a shameful act and even a sin. People in helping professions should continue to watch for signs of depression and language of hopelessness.

## Complex Factors

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**In terms of gender, females are about four times more likely to attempt suicide, but males are about four times more likely to complete suicide. One of the reasons this is true is because females tend to choose potentially less-lethal means such as pills or exsanguination (slowly bleeding out from a self-inflicted wound), whereas males tend to choose guns or hanging.**

## Risk Factors

Perfectionism  
Emotion Regulation  
Suicidal History  
Alcohol or Drug Use  
Stressful life

## Warning Signs

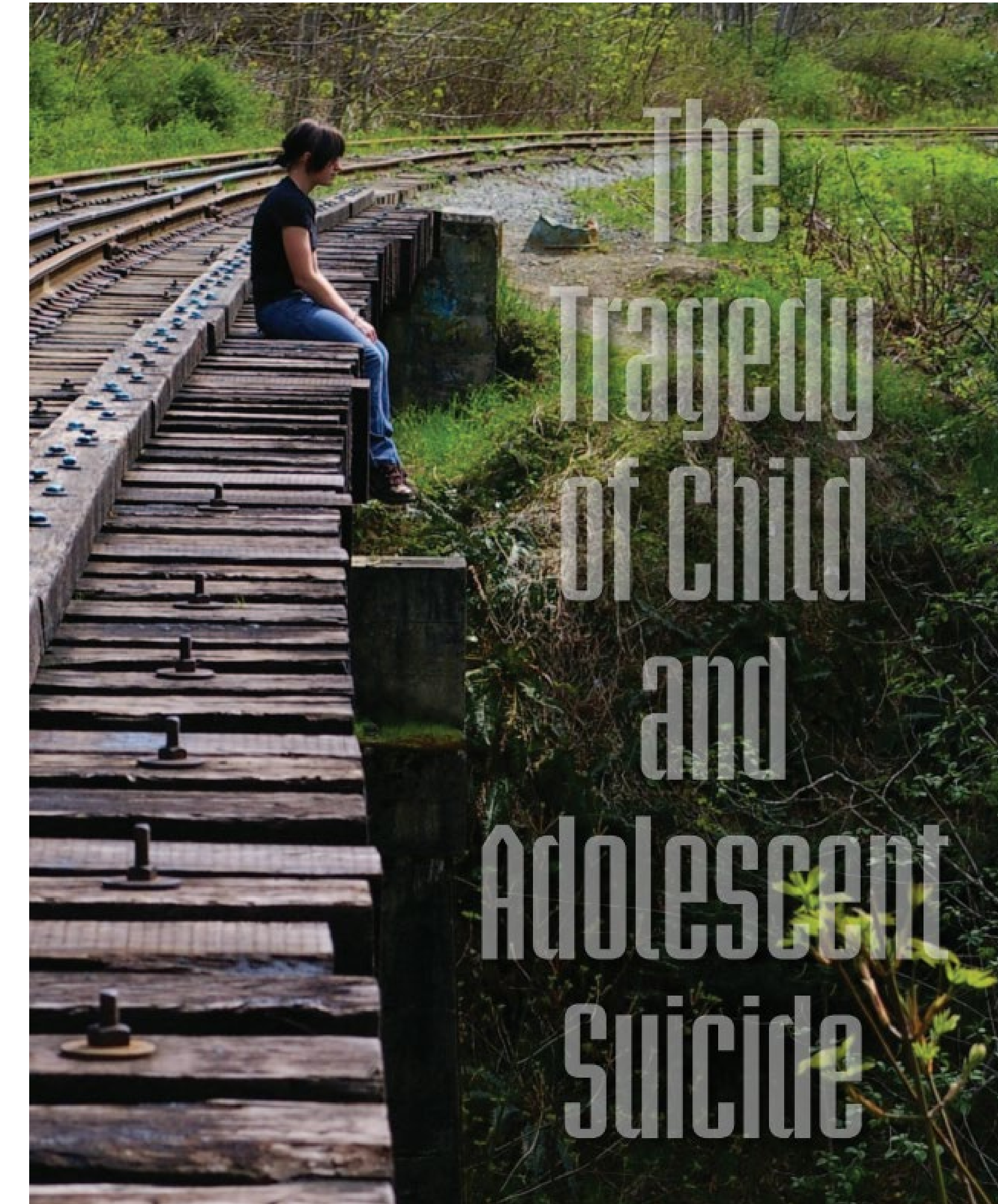
- Making verbal comments ranging from wanting to kill themselves to more general statements such as wanting to disappear.
- Researching online or in-person to identify ways to end one's life.
- Making verbal or written comments (including those on social media) indicating hopelessness, purposelessness, anxiety, withdrawal, anger, or despair.

**A person who exhibits these and other warning signs and risk factors is in a situation that requires immediate action.**

## Helpful Resources

For more information on suicide risks and how to help students deal with suicidal thoughts, please consult a local mental-health professional, the counselor at your school, or one of the links below.

- Information about bullying, cyberbullying, and prevention: <http://www.stopbullying.gov>.
- The Parent Resource Program (The Jason Foundation): <http://jasonfoundation.com/get-involved/parent/parent-resource-program/>.
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: <http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>.
- Suicide Prevention Resource Center: <http://www.sprc.org/>.



## Link to References

<https://jae.adventist.org/2018.3.2>

## Acknowledgements

2019 Associated Church Press Merit Award



## What to Do

Consult with a trained professional if you are concerned about a student;  
Reach out and create a bond with at-risk students.  
Pray for and with your students.  
Be open to being approached.  
Consider establishing a school-wide suicide-prevention program.

**Consider establishing a school-wide suicide-prevention program that includes protocols on how to craft a response for when a student suicide attempt or death occurs. This is something everyone hopes will not be necessary, but it is too late to create such a response when you actually need it.**

## Conclusion

Suicide can be an overwhelming topic, and a scary one for both school personnel and the person who is having suicidal thoughts. The most important thing to do is to have a response prepared.