**Choices Topic for December: Suicide Awareness**

**Signs and Symptoms, Know Your FACTS:**

**F: feelings**- expressing hopelessness about the future

**A: actions** – displaying severe or overwhelming pain or distress

**C: changes** –showing worrisome behavioral cues and marked changes in behavior, including: withdrawal from friends, social activities, anger or hostility or changes in sleep

**T: threats** – talking about, writing about, posting about or making plans for suicide

**S: situations** –experiencing stressful situations such as loss, change, humiliation, trouble at home or with the law

**Suicide By the Numbers**

* An American dies by suicide every 12.95 minutes
* Over 40,000 Americans die by suicide every year
* Suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death for ages 10-24
* For every woman who dies by suicide, four men die by suicide, but women are 3x more likely to attempt
* 90% of those who die by suicide could have gained from psychiatric help
* More than 1.5 million years of life are lost annually to suicide

**Sam Scharff, LCDC, LPC-intern Choices Counselor**

**Under the supervision of Crystal Collier, PhD, LPC-S Office A148 sscharff @EHSHouston.org**

**Discussion Questions & Facts: Catch the Warning Signs**

**Students:**

* What should you do if you suspect someone might be at risk for suicide or self harm?
* Who can you confide in if feeling sad, depressed, or overwhelmed?
* How can you talk openly with your family and/or friends about the reality of suicide?
* What are some ways you cope with stress?

**Parents, Faculty, Staff:**

* How comfortable are you speaking openly with your family about the reality of depression and suicidal thoughts?
* How can schools and communities work together to prevent and educate on suicide?
* What are some strategies you use to cope with stress and overwhelming feelings?

Resources: Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance [www.dbsaalliance.org](http://www.dbsaalliance.org); Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance of Greater Houston [www.dbsahouston.org](http://www.dbsahouston.org); Teen Mental Health <http://teenmentalhealth.org/>; National Alliance on Mental Illness <https://www.nami.org/>; National Suicide Prevention Hotline (800) 273-8255 <http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>; Teen Suicide Hotline Suicide Hotline: 800-784-2433



**IS PATH WARM: Use these cues as warning signs of suicide risk.**

**Suicide Risk Factors**:

* Mental illness including depression, conduct disorders, and substance use
* Family stress/dysfunction
* Environmental risks, including presence of firearm in the home
* Situational crisis such as traumatic death of a loved one, physical or sexual abuse, and family violence, etc