

R U OK? TEEN DEPRESSION & SUICIDE BY KRISTI HUGSTAD

Listen Up.

1. How often do you, your friends or family members talk about suicide, depression or mental illness?
2. What are some things in your life you feel you need to “keep up” with?
3. What would happen if you *didn't* keep up with these things?
4. Have you ever felt like you might have depression?
5. List three things that make you feel *bad* about social media.
6. List three things that make you feel *good* about social media.
7. Which list is easier to make?

Depression

1. Did you learn anything new about depression?
2. Why do you think that most people who complete suicide suffer from depression?
3. Did this chapter make you think of anyone (including yourself) specifically?
4. Why did you think of that person?
5. What are some things you can do to help?

Jackie's Story

1. What are some things Jackie experienced that could cause or worsen depression?
2. Did you relate to anything in Jackie's story?
3. What are some ways Jackie coped with her depression?
4. What could Jackie have done at a younger age to make her life easier?

Ask the Question

1. Have you ever known someone going through a hard time and didn't know what to say (or do)?
2. Can you think of anyone in your life who needs to hear, “R U OK?” right now?
3. If yes, list three people (using initials) you are committed to asking, “R U OK?”
4. What can you do to prepare to listen?
5. Is there an adult you know you can trust if a friend tells you something you need to report?

What to say. What not to say.

1. If you knew your friend was depressed, what would you do about it?
2. Can you think of a time someone said something to you that made you feel better?
3. Can you think of a time someone said something hurtful that you still remember?
4. Have you ever said anything that hurt someone else's feelings?

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What to Do

1. Can you think of any changes you can make in your life to help you feel better, mentally, emotionally and physically?
2. Do you get regular exercise and practice good eating habits?
3. Is there someone you can trust to talk to when you're feeling down?
4. How can you better "relax" or "unwind" when you feel stressed out?
5. Do you know of any friend or family member who could benefit from seeking professional help?

Suicide

1. Have you ever heard a friend, family member or peer say anything about having suicidal thoughts?
2. Did you take any action when you heard this?
3. Why do you think some people consider suicide?
4. What would you do if a friend told you they were considering suicide?

Risk Factors

1. Can you think of anyone in your life that currently displays any of these risk factors?
2. Do you recognize any of the risk factors in yourself?
3. Who can you talk to about a friend or family member that's exhibiting risk factors?

Ethan's Story

1. Have you ever found social media channels or other technologies to be addictive?
2. Do you ever feel isolated or lonely because of this obsession?
3. How can a technology obsession be similar to a drug addiction?
4. Has social media ever made you feel down or depressed? Why?
5. Why do you think the wilderness camp helped treat Ethan's depression?

Substance Abuse

1. Do you know anyone who has taken steroids?
2. Do you think they know the side effects?
3. Were you surprised by any of the steroid side effects mentioned here?
4. Do you ever feel pressured to drink alcohol or take drugs?
5. Why do you think alcohol and drug abuse are linked to depression and suicide?

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My Story

1. When do you think Bill first exhibited signs of depression?
2. Do you think Bill made any mistakes after high school? If so, what different choices would you have made?
3. What were some warning signs of steroid use that Bill exhibited?
4. Do you think Bill's steroid use contributed to his depression?
5. What risk factors of suicide did Bill have?
6. What role do you think Bill's prescription drug use played in his suicide?
7. What do you think of Bill's cold-turkey approach for quitting GHB?
8. Do you think having friends complete suicide had an effect on Bill?
9. What suicide warning signs did you find in his behavior?
10. What do you think would have helped Bill?
11. Do you think Bill's upbringing had an impact on him?
12. What advice would you give to a friend thinking about using steroids?
13. If a friend told you that you would be better off without him or her, what would you do?
14. If a friend's behavior scared you, like Bill's did by blockading the bathroom door and cornering his wife, what would you do?

Hope

1. What does hope mean to you?
2. Of the four components of hope, which do you need to strengthen?
3. How can you do it?
4. Can you think of anyone in your life who needs hope?
5. After reading this book, how can you help?

WHERE TO GO FOR HELP

If you or your teen needs more information, resources or immediate help, please know it's available! The following toll-free hotlines are available to help 24/7:

Teenline (This is a crisis hotline for teens to talk to other teens): 800-TLC-TEEN

AFSP American Foundation for Suicide Prevention:
800-273-TALK(8255)

Trevor Lifeline (Crisis line for LGBTQ youth): 866-488-7386

Bullying Hotline: 800-273-8255

National Eating Disorder Association: 800-931-2237

National Alcohol and Drug Abuse Hotline: 877-437-8422