

# Ohio AAP Store It Safe (SIS) FAQ

For Life Side Ambassadors

Ohio Chapter

INCORPORATED IN OHIO

American Academy of Pediatrics

DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN®



## 1 How do you suggest I start this type of conversation with my teen?

- It is important to have regular “check ins” with your teen. Starting these emotional “check ins” when they are young makes it easier as they move into the teen years. Ask questions and actively listen to their response in a supportive and non-judgmental way. Keep the lines of communication open, and if you are worried, reach out to a professional for help.

## 2 What items are considered to be lethal means?

- Including but not limited to firearms, knives, alcohol, prescription and over the counter medication, and ropes.

## 3 How do I know if my teen or any of their friends are at risk?

- It's important to remember that ALL YOUTH are at risk of making a bad choice during times of stress. That is why all lethal means should be locked securely away with youth not having access or knowing where keys are located. Potential warning signs to look for include:
  - a. Talking or writing about suicide
  - b. Withdrawing from friends
  - c. Mood swings
  - d. Increased use of alcohol or drugs
  - e. Giving away belongings for no logical reason

## 4 What type of stressors make youth at increased risk for depression and suicidality?

- Bullying – between peers, especially repeated over time can lead to lower school performance and detachment from others
- Internet usage- studies have shown > 5 hours of video game/internet use daily is strongly associated with higher levels of depression/suicidality
- Increases in stress in school and at home
  - COVID, for example
- Recent attempts by self or others

## 5 Are there particular youth who are more at risk of suicide?

- Some data has shown that LGBTQ+ youth are two to three times more likely to die from suicide than other youth. Alcohol and substance abuse also place a youth at higher risk for suicide.

## 6 If someone suspects that a friend or family member is considering suicide, what should they do?

First, that is what the Ohio AAP Store it Safe materials are here for. And, remember to ACT if you notice the warning signs for suicide or the young person tells you they are thinking about suicide.

- **Acknowledge:** Talk to them. Talking about suicide does not cause it, so don't be afraid to ask. Be direct without being confrontational; say “are you feeling so bad that you are thinking about suicide?”
- **Care:** Let your friend or family member know how much you care about them. Listen without judgment, ask about their feelings and avoid trying to come up with a solution to their problem.
- **Tell:** If a friend or family member is thinking of harming themselves, tell a trusted adult. Call a crisis line, visit the school counselor, tell a parent or refer the teen to someone with professional skills to provide help. Never keep talk of suicide a secret! If there are immediate safety concerns, call 911.

## 7 What are common myths about teen suicide?

- Some believe if you ask directly about suicide that you “plant” an idea in the brain of a teenager; this is just not true. Others think that teens who talk about suicide are not really serious about dying – they think they are just seeking attention. It is important to validate and take seriously concerns of teens when they are shared.

