

Understanding Suicide & Mental Health in People with Disabilities

Suicide can be hard to understand when someone has a disability

People with disabilities may show signs of emotional pain in ways that are different than others. Their reactions, behaviors or communication styles may be misunderstood or ignored.



Why it can be misunderstood *****



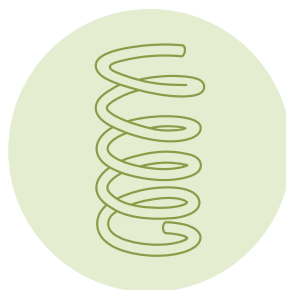
Behaviors may be misread

Coping behaviors, meltdowns or withdrawals may be seen as "Just behavior" and not signs of emotional distress



Communication Differences

Some people may have a hard time expressing how they feel, or they may not have the words to say it.



Hyperarousal

Some people with disabilities experience hyperarousal, making small problems feel overwhelming.



Bias and Stereotypes

A common misconception is that individuals with disabilities are always happy or unaware of exclusion or bullying.



What you can do to help

- Listen without judgment
- Take changes in moods or behaviors seriously
- Ask respectful questions and offer support
- Connect with trusted adults and resources

Bullying, Mental Health and People with Disabilities

Bullying can deeply impact anyone - especially people with disabilities.

Bullying can happen in person or online. It can be physical, verbal, social or even exclusion. When someone is bullied because of their disability it can lead to:



Bullying Can Lead To



**Low
Self Esteem**



**Anxiety &
Depression**



**Emotional
Distress**



**Increased Risk of
Self Harm**

How to Handle Bullying



Remind Yourself - You are not alone

Bullying is never your fault, it is ok to ask for help



Tell someone you trust

Talk to a parent, teacher, counselor or other trusted adult. You deserve the support.



Document what is happening

Keep track of what was said or done, who was involved and when it happened. This will help others support you.



Use Your Voice

You have the right to be respected. Speak up if you need to share something.

REMEMBER

You are valuable. You deserve respect.
There is always help. Things will get better.



Bullying Awareness

Bullying is when someone on purpose hurts, scares or treats you unfairly - more than once. It can be:



- **Physical** (hitting, pushing, taking things)
- **Verbal** (name calling, teasing, threats)
- **Social** (ignoring, leaving out, spreading rumors)
- **Online** (mean texts, posts or messages)

Is it bullying?

Read each situation and answer yes/no

- Someone makes fun of the way you talk
- A friend accidentally bumps into you and apologizes.
- Someone won't let you play games, even when you ask.
- A person calls you hurtful names during lunch every day.

YES

NO

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

How does bullying affect you?

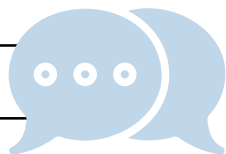
Check all that apply

- ☐ I feel sad or down
- ☐ I feel worried or nervous
- ☐ I don't want to go to school or activities
- ☐ I have trouble sleeping or concentrating



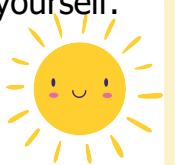
What can you do?

List 3 people you can talk to if you need help



Positive Coping Strategies

List 3 things you can do to take care of yourself.



My Plan: Create a Plan before you need one



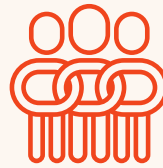
Planning Ahead helps you recognize warning signs, build healthy coping strategies and know who to contact when you need support.



Early Warning Signs

List thoughts or feelings that may lead to a crisis

EX: Poor Sleep, feeling hopeless



My Support Network

People you trust that can help

EX: Friend, therapist or teacher



Triggers to Manage

Things that are hard for your mental health

EX: Certain topics, social media



Professional Contacts

Hotlines or Local Resources
(include phone numbers)

**988 Suicide and Crisis
Lifeline - call or text 988**



Coping Strategies

Things to do to help you calm down

EX: Taking a walk, listening to music, art



My Preferred Care

Things that make me feel better

EX: Cold environment, hugs, blankets