

Suicide Prevention

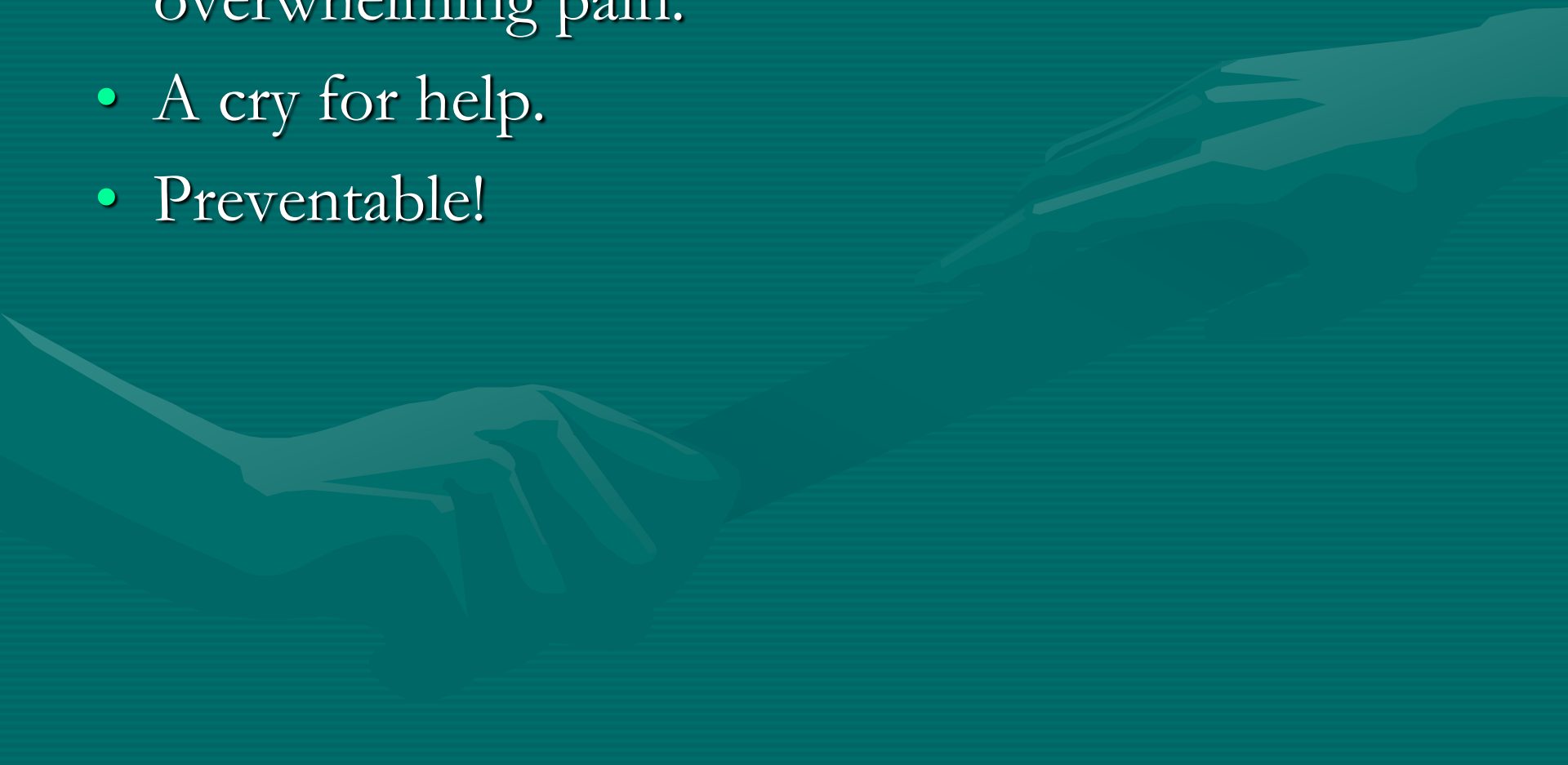
You can make a difference!

Suicide Prevention

- This is a sensitive topic, especially to those of you who have been personally affected. Some of you may feel uncomfortable at times during the presentation. We are not here to judge, but to provide information. If you feel a need to leave, please inform your teacher.

Suicide is...

- An act of desperate hopelessness and overwhelming pain.
- A cry for help.
- Preventable!



Risk Factors – based on statistics

- Major Depression (mental health diagnosis)
- Psychological trauma
- Victim of physical, emotional, or sexual abuse
- Family history of suicidal behavior
- Loss of a significant relationship
- Use of alcohol/drugs
- Gay/lesbian/questioning
- Made a suicide attempt in the past

Protective Factors

- Healthy relationships w/ family & friends
- Involved with sports, hobbies, clubs
- Physically active
- Nutrition
- Alcohol/drug-free lifestyle
- Success in school
- Good coping skills
- Comfortable asking for help
- Feeling needed or relied on by others

Risk Factors vs. Protective Factors

- We need our protective factors to outweigh our risk factors in order to keep ourselves safe.



Warning Signs

- Depressed or irritable mood
- Change in appetite or weight
- Change in sleeping habits
- Significant drop in school or work performance
- Loss of interest in favorite activities
- Feeling increasingly isolated
- Feelings of hopelessness
- Fatigue and loss of energy
- Difficulty in concentrating
- Preoccupation with death and dying

When the crisis is near:

- Saying they want to die, or “Life sucks.”
- Having a plan and means to carry out their plan.
- Sudden change from depressed to cheerful; one last perfect day.
- Giving away prized possessions.

Small Group Activity

- Get into groups of 4-5.
- Read your scenario.
- Answer the questions.
- Present to the class.

Scenario 1

- Jamie is 15 and lacks confidence about her abilities. She doesn't get along with her mom and step-dad. She is the only child at home. She has an older sibling who is in residential treatment for drug abuse. Because of this, Jamie is determined not to use drugs or alcohol. Jamie used to get good grades in middle school, but her grades have dropped since she started high school. She has problems getting to sleep and has been telling her friends that she's tired of life. The one thing that makes her happy is taking walks with her dog every day.

Scenario 2

- Curt, 16, is funny, smart, popular – and very overweight. He eats fast food and junk food a lot and doesn't get much exercise. He succeeds in school by being the funny guy and keeping everyone laughing and in a good mood. He makes fun of himself, especially at weekend parties where he often gets drunk. He gets good grades but doesn't have any particular goals or plans for his life, although he is one of the top students in the theater program. Curt's mom died of cancer when he was 12.

Scenario 3

- Ben, 15, does very poorly in school. He is only a sophomore, but if he continues to fail classes, he will not graduate with his class. He wants to do better, and he does try at times, but it is hard to do homework at home because there is so much turmoil there. Almost every night, one or both of his parents is drunk, and there is a lot of fighting and yelling. Part of the reason Ben has a hard time at school is that he overhears hateful comments about him in the hallway, and he sometimes gets pushed around and called queer or fag.

Scenario 4

- Carrie, 17, is a girl who seems to have everything: good looks, good grades, good health, many friends, lots of activities going on. She and her family are admired and liked by everyone who knows them. Although she is enjoying high school, she is really looking forward to college and preparing for a career. Carrie's life seems ideal, but what she has never revealed to anyone is that from age 7 to 13, she was sexually abused by her uncle. Her current boyfriend is pressuring her to have sex, and she is thinking about breaking up with him even though she feels closer to him than anyone else.

Scenario 5

- Brent, 14, is kind of a hyperactive kid. His parents have to work all the time in order to pay the bills. He has a 2-year-old little sister he takes care of while his parents work. He likes drawing and often has pictures of war and violence in his notebooks. He also writes words on his hands like “hate” and “kill.” He was once a pretty good soccer player, but he lately spends most of his time playing computer games. He has friends online but mostly keeps to himself at school. His grades aren’t very good, but his teachers report that he is smart.

Scenario 6

- Jenny is 17 and she has grown up in a small town. She gets along with her parents and teachers. Jenny often keeps to herself, unless she's working with a group of students on a school project. She is quiet in her classes and doesn't ask questions or add to discussions. Jenny gets good grades and is complimented by her teachers for turning her work in on time, which embarrasses her. Jenny has felt sad since the death of her grandmother last year. Jenny was very close to her grandmother and she has felt lost without her.

Scenario 7

- Molly is 15 and she has lots of friends at school and is always joking and laughing with them, sometimes during class. She spends her weekends staying with friends, drinking and using drugs. Molly doesn't talk with her parents, she avoids them. When her dog died last week she stayed home, in her room all week crying. Molly spends most of her time away from school on Facebook and just posted a comment telling everyone that she loves and appreciates them and she hopes that they all live fun lives.

Scenario 8

- Archie is 16 and he struggles in school and feels that it will be very difficult to earn enough credits to graduate from high school with his class. He gets along with his teachers and other students. Archie is an excellent swimmer and hopes to make it to state this year. His parents are alcoholics and they spend most nights at the bar, or drinking with their friends, so he rarely sees them. Archie feels that life is hard, but his coach, teachers and friends are a great support.

Important Note

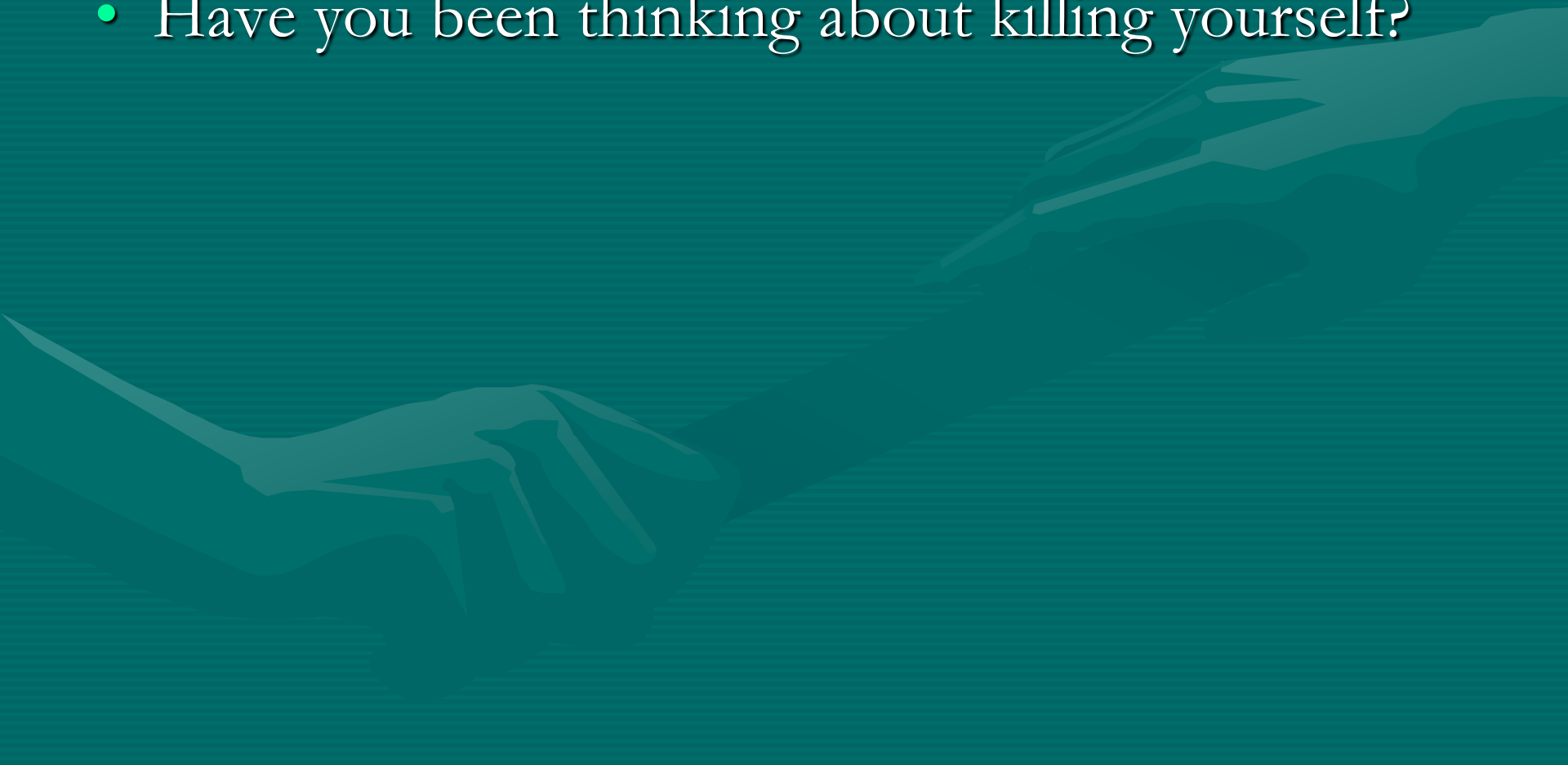
- It takes special training to determine the potential for someone to attempt suicide and to intervene appropriately.
- These scenarios are meant to help you think about the possibility of suicide attempt, but not meant to train you in making any real-life decisions about “how suicidal” someone is.
- Anytime you are worried about someone, talk to an adult!

Know What to Say

- Talking about suicide does not cause suicide.
- Not talking actually contributes to suicide.
- Take all talk of suicide seriously.
- Ask “The Question.”

The Question

- Are you thinking about suicide?
- Have you been thinking about killing yourself?



Know What to Do

- If it is during vacation time, a weekend, or anytime you're away from school, tell an adult, and/or call the crisis hotline.
- Additional phone numbers:

1-877-553-TEEN

1-800-SUICIDE

During School

- Bring your friend to his/her counselor and talk with the counselor together with your friend.
OR
- Speak with his/her counselor on your own.
Counselors will keep your name confidential if that is your preference.

- Counselors will try to determine how much at risk your friend is. They may get help in doing this from our mental health consultant. If there is an actual risk, counselors will notify a parent and assist with getting your friend to outside help, which may include counseling, antidepressant medication, alcohol/drug treatment, nutrition and exercise.

Remember:

- You can do everything in your power to help someone find a way to feel better, but you can't keep them alive. No one can be with someone 24 hours a day every day for the rest of their lives – we don't expect you to take on that responsibility. You can help, but in the end the only person who can truly prevent suicide is the one who contemplates it.

- Please keep a card. Many of you may not ever need it, but you never know.
- Your help is a valuable part of our suicide prevention efforts at Centennial High School.
Thank you!

