

# Suicide and Bullying: Facts, Risks, and Prevention Efforts Everyone Should Know

*Stand for the Silent, an organization helping to stop bullying is putting suicide in the spotlight.*

OKLAHOMA CITY, OK, UNITED STATES, September 5, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- September is Suicide Prevention Month, making it a great time to put this crucial topic in the spotlight. It's a topic that is impacting the nation's youth. The more parents, teachers, and communities know about the facts, risks, and prevention efforts, the more equipped they will be to help prevent such tragedies.



Photo courtesy of Stand For The Silent

Now is the time for everyone to take a deep dive into the topic so they can come up with what to do to help with suicide prevention.

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The only way we can help turn this around in America is together. We need families, communities, teachers, and schools to take this seriously and make anti-bullying and suicide prevention a priority.”

*Kirk Smalley, co-founder of Stand for the Silent*

“This is a difficult topic and hits home for me,” says Kirk Smalley, co-founder of Stand for the Silent. “I hope that by me sharing and doing what I do with Stand for the Silent, that it helps others by reducing bullying and helps with suicide prevention.”

Smalley started the anti-bullying organization with his late wife, Laura, after their 11-year-old son committed suicide due to bullying. Having turned their pain and loss into a mission of helping others, he travels the country giving presentations about bullying, among other things.

The mission is to help end bullying by raising awareness, sharing the facts, and offering solutions.

According to research published in the January 2024 issue of the journal *Pediatrics*, suicide is the second leading cause of death for ages 10-24 in the United States. It's been declared a public health issue and is considered a major cause of mortality in youth. Researchers report that suicide attempts are more common in females, but deaths are more common in males because male youth use more lethal means.

The report also shares that the overall risk of having suicidal thoughts is elevated for youth who are involved in bullying, whether they are the bully or the one being bullied. If a family, school, or community needed a reason to make anti-bullying a larger part of their goal, this is it. By addressing bullying, there is a good chance it will help to save lives from suicide.

Here are some important things to keep in mind about bullying and suicide prevention:

**Risk Factors.** According to the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), suicide is complex, with many different factors contributing to one's risk of suicide. It often does not have one direct cause, but a mix of risk factors exists. Some of the risk factors include being bullied, a family history of suicide, prior suicide attempts, mental health issues, social isolation, having access to lethal means, family and peer conflicts, etc.

**Warning Signs.** Many youth who are considering suicide display warning signs, but that may not always be the case. Some of the warning signs to watch for include talking about suicide, mood changes, being depressed, behavior changes, withdrawing from activities, giving away possessions, isolating from people, using substances, etc. If warning signs are spotted, they should be discussed and addressed. Children need help addressing and working through issues, emotions, and problems they may be experiencing.

**Prevention Tips.** According to the AAP, there are numerous things that parents and teachers can do to help prevent youth suicide. Some of these include taking notice of mental health issues, creating a safe space where they can talk about their feelings, not dismiss what they are saying,



Photo courtesy of Stand For The Silent



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respond with empathy and understanding, get help, remove lethal means within their reach (i.e., firearms, opioids, etc.), keep an eye on social media, and encourage healthy habits. If a child is being bullied, it needs to be addressed right away so that it doesn't lead to depression, which can lead to the child becoming suicidal as well.

Getting Help. Parents and teachers who feel that immediate help is needed out of concern for a suicidal youth can call 988 24/7 for assistance. They provide free, confidential support and crisis resources. Locally, parents can arrange to get help from school counselors and therapists. Stand for the Silent can also visit the school or community to help raise awareness and provide helpful information and tools.

"The only way we can help turn this around in America is together," said Smalley. "We need families, communities, teachers, and schools to all take this seriously and make anti-bullying and suicide prevention a high priority. I'm happy to help them do it!"

Stand for the Silent travels the country, giving presentations about bullying to schools, providing bullying prevention, giving out scholarships, offering intervention strategies, and more. Those interested in getting involved can start a chapter of the group in their area, obtain a free K-2 bullying prevention curriculum or [cyberbullying handbook for parents](#), host a presentation at their school, introduce the How All Started video, and [donate](#) to help support the cause. To get more information, visit the site at: <https://standforthesilent.org/>

#### About Stand for the Silent

Started in 2010, Stand for the Silent is an organization on a mission to help eliminate bullying nationwide. Kirk and Laura Smalley founded the group after their child took his own life due to bullying. They offer free resources for parents and educators and travel to schools to host presentations. They have been to over 6,025 schools and spoken with more than 4.15 million students. To get more information, visit the site at: <https://standforthesilent.org/>

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