

Causes and Preventive Measures of Suicide by Depression among Adolescents

by
Dr. Harishankar Singh, Ms. Archana Singh**

Introduction:

Today Suicide is a serious problem among adolescents. This is increasing day by day. It is estimated that mostly youth and adults commit suicide due to depression. They try to end their depression by ending their life. Majority of them have a mental illness at the time of their death and the most common mental illness is depression. Untreated depression is the basic cause for suicide among adolescents. Many adults commit suicide because depression is triggered by several negative life experiences and the person does not get effective treatment.

The Causes of Depression :

Adolescent depression is a cause of mental disorder occurring during the teenage years due to the following bitter life experiences-

- Teen dating violence
- Faltering school/college performance
- Failing relations with family and friends
- The death of close one
- Loss of Job
- Intense emotional pain
- Maltreatment
- Sexual, School and Community violence.
- Serious illness
- Loss of hope
- Physical and verbal abuse
- Feeling helpless and isolated
- A horrible disappointment
- Low self esteem
- A great failure in career.

The above causes of depression lead adolescents to commit suicide. In order to prevent suicide, depression must be treated immediately. Depressed adolescents may be identify with the help of some signs of depression.

The symptoms of Depression :

An adolescent may be identified as depressed, if he/she shows the following symptoms-

- Unable to Concentrate
- Feeling sad continuously for a long time
- Changing sleeping habits (sleeping too much or too little)
- Feeling pessimistic
- Lose of interest in favourite in activities
- Crying frequently
- Feeling angry and guilty
- Feeling, hopeless, helpless and worthless
- Unable to make decisions
- Reduced pleasure in daily activities
- Loss of interest in friends.
- Temper agitation
- Aggressive behaviours.
- Talking about harming self or others.

If above symptoms persist for at least two weeks and cause significant mental distress, the immediate treatment should be given.

Treatment of Depression :

Depression is a treatable illness. Depressive illness makes one feel exhausted worthless and helpless. Treatment options for adolescents with depression are similar to those for depressed adults. The treatment may be given according to the cause of depression. Research has shown that two short-term psychotherapies, Interpersonal cognitive/behavioral, are helpful for some forms of depression.

Family therapy may be helpful if family conflict is contributing to the depression. Support from teacher and peer groups to solve with school/college problems may also be helpful. Counseling may help teens deal with periods of low mood. Cognitive behavioral therapy, which teaches depressed adolescents ways of fighting negative thoughts and recognizing them as symptoms, not the truth about their world, is the most effective non-medication treatment for depression.

In spite of the treatments like Medications, Psychotherapy, getting help from others etc. the better solution is to get the best possible advice and search for treatment by own efforts. When there is a feeling of depression, an immediate action should be taken to get better as soon as possible. In order to do so, take some deep breaths and do something that gives relaxation. Take a bath, Go for a walk, listen to some nice music, plan to meet a close one etc. Remember that untreated depression is the major cause for suicide among adolescents, so it must be treated immediately.

Prevention of Suicide :

Suicide can be prevented to the great extent among adolescents by the treatment of depression. Periods of depressed mood are common in most adolescents. However, supportive interpersonal relationships and healthy coping skills can help prevent such periods from leading to suicide. Preventing suicide and suicidal behaviour requires the support and contributions of many partners : federal agencies, state and local health departments, nonprofit organizations, academic institutions, International agencies and private industry.

Suicide awareness or prevention programs can be delivered in a variety of settings such as schools churches, or in the community as a whole. Public health programs are an important aspect of the prevention of suicide by depression. Public health provides support guidance and counseling to an individual by decreasing the emotional pain and by giving assurance that the person is safe.

Suicide can also be prevented by reaping the benefits of diagnosis and treatment of the depression by Psychiatrists, Psychologists, Mental health professionals as well as primary care physicians.

Many people who attempt suicide talk about it before making the attempt. Sometimes, simply talking to a sympathetic, nonjudgmental listener is enough to prevent the person from attempting suicide. Do not ignore a suicide threat or attempted suicide.

The educational systems also have a role to play in treatment of depression leading to the prevention of suicide. These educational institutes can teach adolescents to recognize the warning signs of a potential suicide attempt in their friends, to provide peer counseling. Mental health professionals claim that all persons contemplating suicide give at least one warning, and 80% provide repeated warning. If these warnings are heeded, potential suicides can be averted.

By taking the above preventive measures the number of suicides can be reduced among adolescents. It should always remember that suicide is never the solution of any kind of problem.

References :

- Prashantham, B.J. (1978). Indian case studies in therapeutic, counseling, Christian counseling centre, Vellore.

- Harwitz, D., and Ravizza, L. (2000). Suicide and Depression, Emergency medical clinics of north America 18:263-271.
 - Dougless, J.D. (1970). The Social Meaning of Suicidal, Princeton University Press, New Jerscly.
 - Pretgel, P.W. (1972). Understanding and counselling the Suicidal person, Abingdon, New York.
 - Osberne, C.C. (1969). The Art of Understanding yourself, Zondervan Books, Mechigan.
 - Rogers C.R. (1951). Client Centred Therapy Houghton Mifflin company.
 - Erikson, E.H. (1971). Identity : Youth & Crises, Faber & Faber London.
-

*** Lecturer**

**Shree Sardar Patel Mahila B.Ed. College, Joshipura,
Junagadh-362 002 (Guj.)**