



**NYU CHILD
STUDY CENTER**
New York University School of Medicine
Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry

MEDIA ALERT

Contact: Kari Root Bonaro 212 263 2479 office
646 354 3405 cell
kari.root@med.nyu.edu

CDC FINDS INCREASE IN TEEN SUICIDE; NYU CHILD STUDY CENTER RESPONDS – IDENTIFIES WARNING SIGNS AND PROVIDES TIPS FOR PARENTS

*New CDC Report Shows Increase in
Suicide Rates in Children Under 19 Years of Age from 2003 – 2004*

NEW YORK, February 5, 2007 – The New York University Child Study Center has identified warning signs of depression in teenagers for parents and tips for helping teens who may be depressed, in light of a new report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The CDC study, published in the February 2007 issue of *Pediatrics* finds that suicide rates in children under 19 years of age increased between 2003 and 2004. Suicide was the only statistically significant increase in child death over this time. Overall, the suicide rate increased by 18.2 percent from 2003 to 2004, an increase largely driven by older teens.

“A teen’s statement of a wish to kill him/herself must be taken seriously,” said Lori Evans, Ph.D., Director of Psychology Training and the Project Coordinator of TASA (Treatment of Adolescent Suicide Attempters) at the NYU Child Study Center. “Before they actually commit or attempt suicide, teens often make direct statements about their intention to end their lives, or less direct statements about how they might as well be dead or that their friends and family would be better off without them.”

“Discussing the problem does not encourage the teenager to go through with the plan,” emphasizes Dr. Evans. “On the contrary, it will help him or her know that someone is willing to be a friend. It may save your adolescent’s life.”

Watch for symptoms of depression lasting longer than two weeks, which may include:

- A change in eating and sleeping habits
- A marked personality change, exhibiting angry actions or rebellious behavior or withdrawal from friends and regular activities
- Involvement in drugs or alcohol or other risky behaviors such as reckless driving
- An overreaction to a recent humiliating experience
- Difficulty in concentrating and a decline in the quality of school work
- Persistent boredom and/or lethargy
- Unusual neglect of appearance
- Complaints about physical symptoms such as headaches and fatigue
- A pattern of giving away or throwing away possessions

- Intolerance of praise or rewards
- Preoccupation with death in writing songs or poems
- An increase in comments such as “I can’t take it anymore” or “nobody cares; I wish I was dead”

How to help

- Take person’s comments regarding self-hate, suicide, or death very seriously
- Don’t try to convince the person to not feel bad. Don’t tell them to “snap out of it” or say “don’t feel bad”
- Keep in close contact with the person and their parent, teacher, or a good friend
- Ask the child or teen what you could do that would be helpful to them
- Don’t promise to keep any information a secret
- If symptoms persist or are dangerous and interfere with daily functioning, consult a mental health professional immediately

Dr. Lori Evans is the Coordinator of TASA (Treatment of Adolescent Suicide Attempters) and the Director of Psychology Training at the NYU Child Study Center. TASA is a multi-site study designed to develop and evaluate treatments for adolescent suicide attempters to prevent reattempts. Participants received state of the art treatment by senior clinicians. TASA research findings are forthcoming.

CONTACT: Kari Root
212 263 2479
646 354 3405 (cell)
kari.root@med.nyu.edu

NYU Child Study Center – Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry

The NYU Child Study Center is dedicated to increasing the awareness of child mental health issues and improving the research necessary to advance the prevention, identification and treatment of mental illness in children and adolescents on a national scale. The Center offers expert psychiatric services for children and families with emphasis on early diagnosis and intervention. The Center's mission is to bridge the gap between science and practice, integrating the finest research with patient care and state-of-the-art training, utilizing the resources of the New York University School of Medicine. The NYU Child Study Center offers a variety of mental health services for children, adolescents, young adults and their families. Child and Family Associates is the clinical arm of the NYU Child Study Center and the point of entry for all clinical programs. Its goal is to bring together research-supported evaluations and treatments with an individualized and family-centered approach. The Child Study Center was founded in 1997 and established as the Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry within the NYU School of Medicine in 2006.

www.AboutOurKids.org