

ENOSBURG FALLS HIGH SCHOOL
PO Box 417
Enosburg Falls, VT 05450
(802) 933-7777
Erik Remmers, Principal



October 17th, 2017

Dear EFHS parents and guardians:

I am writing today to discuss a tough subject- teen suicide. Since the start of the 2017-2018 school year there have been a number of teen deaths in Vermont related to suicide, and in just the last week there have been two tragic deaths by suicide here in Franklin County. This trend, while scary, is one that can't be ignored if we are to ensure that our kids remain safe and healthy.

As most of you know, the start of the school year at EFHS has come with its own share of tragedy unrelated to teen suicide. In just these first few months we have had a student sustain serious and life threatening injuries in an auto accident, and another pass away after a long and courageous fight with cancer. With these two recent suicide deaths in our area, the issue of death and suicide is very much on our students' minds. We are hearing about it in our classes and in our hallways, and as a result we have seen an uptick in the need for student support in our school counseling offices.

My intent in letting you know all of this is not to scare you, but to make sure that you are aware of the current circumstances that are affecting our students. Our school continues to take proactive steps to ensure our kids are safe and feel connected to our school community. Our teachers and staff work hard to build strong and positive relationships with our students, are regularly meeting to discuss supports and "red-flags" among our students, and take behaviors related to bullying and harassment very seriously. Our entire staff is on alert for concerning behaviors, and will refer students to our counseling offices as the need arises.

I believe, however, that our best chance to be sure that our kids are safe is to keep you, the parents, in the know, which is why I'm writing today. If both home and school are keeping an eye out for concerning behaviors during this elevated period of time, we have a better chance of intervening if needed. That's why I've included a few resources for parents in identifying concerning behaviors, and strongly encourage any parent who feels that their child is at immediate risk to contact the **NCSS Crisis Line at (802) 524-6554**. If your child is not at immediate risk but you still have concerns, please feel free to contact our school counseling offices and we can help direct you to the best support options for your child. Working together we make sure our students get the support they need to be safe and healthy.

Find more information about teen suicide prevention at the *Society for the Prevention of Teen Suicide* website, or please feel free to contact our school counseling office, or me directly, if you have any questions.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Erik Remmers", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Erik Remmers

Worried about Suicide? Learn the

FACTS!

Are you concerned that someone you know may be at risk for suicide? Your first step in helping may be as simple as learning the FACTS or warning signs. The following signs may mean that a youth is at risk for suicide, particularly if that person attempted suicide in the past.

F EELINGS

- Expressing hopelessness about the future.

A CTIONS

- Displaying severe/overwhelming pain or distress.

C HANGES

- Showing worrisome behavioral cues or marked changes in behavior, including: withdrawal from friends or changes in social activities; anger or hostility; or changes in sleep.

T HREATS

- Talking about, writing about, or making plans for suicide.

S ITUATIONS

- Experiencing stressful situations including those that involve loss, change, create personal humiliation, or involve getting into trouble at home, in school or with the law. These kinds of situations can serve as triggers for suicide.

If you notice any of these warning signs, you can help!

1. Express your concern about what you are observing in their behavior
2. Ask directly about suicide
3. Encourage them to call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 800-273-TALK (8255)
4. Involve an adult they trust

Remember, if you have IMMEDIATE concern about someone's safety, call 911 right away!

Suicide is a preventable problem.

By taking the time to notice and reach out to a peer, you can be the beginning of a positive solution.

Don't Forget -

Youth Suicide Prevention is Everyone's Business!