

## Why Do People Keep It A Secret?

The stigma or negative thoughts associated with mental illness causes many people not to seek help. When people are having problems and do not seek help, sometimes they may begin to feel hopeless. Hopelessness can lead to thoughts of suicide.

Mental health problems are surprisingly common. Mental illness can happen to anyone; no one is immune. They are equal opportunity diseases, striking families of all walks of life, regardless of age, race, income, religion, or education.

People with mental illness can recover or manage their conditions and go on to lead happy, healthy, productive lives. One of the most important factors in recovery is the understanding and acceptance of friends.

You can be the first step in someone's recovery, just by supporting them. Be there for your friends if they have a mental illness.

## Fact or Fiction?

Fiction: You can't stop people who want to kill themselves.

Fact: Most suicidal people do not really want to die. They just want their pain to stop.

.....  
Fiction: Talking to my friend about suicide will only make it worse.

Fact: Talking through feelings with your friends and trusted adults can help you realize the need for help. By showing concern and support, you can encourage your friend to talk to their parents or another trusted adult about getting help.

.....  
Fiction: Telling someone that my friend is talking about suicide is betraying their trust.

Fact: Depression and thoughts of suicide interferes with a person's ability or wish to get help. It is an act of true friendship to share your concerns with a trusted adult.



**Dr. Alan Lee, Superintendent**  
**Dr. Pam Henson, Director of Instructional Support**  
**Mrs. Patrice Harris, Intervention Supervisor**

# Shatter the Silence



**The Secret You  
Shouldn't Keep**

## Warning Signs

- Talking about suicide
- Thinking about suicide
- Reading about suicide
- Writing about suicide
- Talking about feeling worthless or hopeless
- Losing interest in activities
- Using or increasing use of drugs or alcohol
- Any changes from typical behaviors such as having problems at school and/or not wanting to go out with friends

## What To Do

- Be honest and express your concern
- Listen and offer support
- Ask directly about thoughts of suicide
- Take them seriously if they are thinking about suicide
- Find help
- Offer to accompany them to seek help

## What Not to Do

- Think it will go away
- Keep it a secret
- Argue with the person
- Think nothing can be done
- Think you can fix it all by yourself

## Where To Go For Help or Information

- Go to the nearest emergency room
- Call 911
- Call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK
- Call Baldwin County Mental Health Center at 928-9500
- Call Family Counseling Center of Mobile at 431-5111 or 1-800-239-1117

**“To the world you may be just one person, but to one person you may be the world.”**

**-Brandy**

