

# Protecting Our Children in Schools and Communities

With all the headlines about school violence and youth suicide, we need to focus our attention on how to prevent these incidents from affecting the kids in our own communities. While there are no easy answers, here are some recommendations:

- Teach children that their actions have real consequences. Unlike TV and video games, real victims do not just get up and walk away and most “bad guys” are punished.
- Young children can be depressed too! Untreated depression can be linked to acts of violence – directed outward or inward. Be aware of major changes in children’s behavior or attitudes. Seek help early. Call the NAMI (National Alliance of Mental Illness) NH information and resource line at 1-800-242-6264.
- Listen to kids and hear what they are saying. Every child who threatens to harm himself or others must be taken seriously and should be professionally evaluated. If the child talks about a weapon, contact someone in authority immediately. Call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255).
- Seek the help of others. Parents, friends and family; school and community counselors; law enforcement; medical and mental health providers; clergy and anyone else a young person trusts can help create a Safety Plan.
- Access to firearms and other weapons must be limited to those trained and responsible in their use. Even with firearms training, an individual whose judgement is impaired due to lack of maturity, substance use or anger should not have access to weapons.
- Plan ahead! Schools and communities should develop realistic Emergency Management Plans to respond quickly and effectively to any type of emergency – environmental, violent or any other type of crisis. Make sure that everyone involved knows and has practiced their assigned roles. Good planning can literally save lives!

**For assistance in developing a plan, contact the NH Division of Homeland Security and Management at 1-800-852-3792**

**For Suicide Prevention/Postvention Info:\***

**[www.theconnectproject.org/understanding-suicide](http://www.theconnectproject.org/understanding-suicide) or**

**[www.theconnectproject.org/get-help](http://www.theconnectproject.org/get-help)**

\*there is a charge for trainings



For more Fact Sheets please go to [www.ParentHelpNH.org](http://www.ParentHelpNH.org)

Children’s Hospital at Dartmouth, Injury Prevention Center, NH Department of Health and Human Services, NH Department of Education, NH Pediatric Society, SAFE KIDS NH & Partnership for a DrugFreeNH.org