

Why do Teens Commit Suicide?

continued from page 28

A bad event—or a cluster of them—can trigger a suicide attempt. Here are some common reasons for adolescent suicide attempts:*

Personal factors

- The loss of a loved one through death or separation
- Parental demands for achievement
- Family estrangement because of quarrels—either between the parents or between parent and teenager
- Conflict with brothers and sisters
- Unwanted pregnancy
- A parent's absence because of mental illness or conflict with the law
- Conflict with stepparents
- Cruelty, rejection, or abandonment by parent(s)
- Having spent time in a hospital, jail, reformatory, etc.
- Suicide attempts by parent(s)
- Previous suicide attempt by teenager
- History of alcohol or drug abuse by teenager
- Alcoholic parent(s)

Social factors

- History of broken homes†
- Family disorganization because of repeated moves and changes of schools
- Great financial difficulties

This article was prepared with the assistance of a staff member from the Bridge Family Center. For a more indepth article on this subject, contact the Bridge Family Center, 77 Peachtree Place, N.W., Atlanta, GA 30309.

*This article was adapted from one printed in the article "Adolescent Suicide," *Transitions; Perspectives on Today's Teenager for the Physician*, 1980; 3(2):8-9.

†The same article points out that "a broken home, by itself, does not necessarily imply a higher risk of suicide...the crucial factor is the stability of the home life over a five-year period."