Home Safety Checklist

[For Parents eyes’ only]

Because we know that your Child has been thinking about suicide, our first goal is to make sure he does not have access to means to hurt himself.

It is impossible to make your home or any place 100% safe. But we want to put as much distance as possible between the thought of ending his life and the access to hurting himself. Often, actions to hurt oneself are impulsive, research shows most act within 5 minutes of having the thought. So, if we can delay access to something for 5 minutes, there is a greater chance that the thoughts and distress with decrease or they will become distracted by something. For example, we know that if it is not available in the home a teen can walk to the store to purchase a razor. But in that time, a friend could call, he could use a coping skill, hear a song he likes, or see a cute dog while on the way – any one of these things could diffuse the thought of harming himself.

When making your home safe, there are few items that are most important to consider: medications, firearms, and sharps.

Medications:

* When you leave here today, go through your home and make sure that all medications, including Tylenol and vitamins, are all in the same place. Dispose of medications that you no longer need. Keep track of the quantity that you currently have in the home and store them in a lock box.

Firearms:

* The best option is to not have any firearms in the home. Even if you do not think your child knows they are there, it is still best to have them outside the home. If this is difficult, have a friend keep yours for the time being. Or do not store ammunition in the home.

Sharps:

* Sharps include knives, scissors, razors, pencil sharpeners, eye-liner sharpeners, safety pins, nails, removable corners of picture frames. These are the most overwhelming, but remember, our goal is to make access as difficult as possible.
* Similar to the medication, try to gather all these items in the home and keep them in one place, like a locked cabinet. Members of the household can “check out” items (I.e., scissors and razors) for a short amount of time for use and then return them.

It will be important to check your child’s room very thoroughly to ensure his safety. Some places potentially dangerous items may be stored include backpack, inside a phone case, desks/drawers, corners of carpet, hollow curtain rods, soles of shoes, and inside pillow cases.

Additional resources for locking items are available here.