For Family Members of Teens Whose Friend Died by Suicide

Complied by students from Johnston High School, Johnston, Iowa

This is a list of things a group of teens that had a friend die from suicide would like you to know.

• Be Supportive, but not overbearing.

• Be understanding when your teen has a short fuse.

• Don’t be overprotective.

• Talk, but don’t ask 20 questions every time you see your teen.

• Don’t ask, “How are you doing?” DUH!

• Ask, “What do you need?”, “Do you want to talk about it?”, or “What can I do to help?” and then be sure to follow through with it.

• Monitor social media because your teen is going to tell their friends how they’re REALLY feeling.

• Let your teen lead with physical touch (i.e., hugs, pats, back rubs). Just keep doing what was normal before.

• Watch out for too much self-isolation; encourage interaction with others. Offer to do something together with your teen.

• Be prepared for unpredictable, volatile emotions from your teen.

• Understand that for the short-term, schoolwork may not be a top priority and your teen may fall behind. Be understanding, communicate with teachers, and offer solutions to help get back on track.