



Nineline **1-800-999-9999** it's free!

## running away

Are you concerned about a child or teen with thoughts of leaving home, running away, or who is actually homeless?

### why do today's youth run away?

Most kids don't run away simply for adventure. They're running from what they feel are unbearable or unsolvable situations. They're running because they just don't know what else to do - but they know they have to do something. While only about six percent of the kids who leave home stay on the streets or continue to return to the streets, there are still tens of thousands of kids living on the streets each year!

In most states, a runaway is anyone under 18 who leaves their home (or other residence) for one or more nights without the permission of his or her parents (or legal guardians). A homeless teenager is anyone under 18, who has no home to return to and needs supervision and care. Throwaways or lockouts are kids who have been thrown out by parents or guardians, feel unwelcome at home, or that there is no place for them in the family. When we talk about homeless and runaway youth, we talk about these young people too.



## what are the warning signs?

Running away is a often cry for help and/or a pro-active approach to “solving” a particular problem they are facing at home. These issues need to be addressed along with the decision to run away. Problems such as depression, abusive parents, guardians or partners, neglect, or sexual abuse are just some examples of intolerable conditions that cause young people to leave home.

The following are some questions you may want to ask the teen you are concerned about.

1. What else could you do to improve your home situation before you leave?
2. What would have to change to make you comfortable staying at home?
3. Who can help you improve your home life?
4. Is running away safe? If I leave, where will you go on the first night? What about the next nights?
5. Where will you go and how will you survive?
6. Who can you count on to help your?
7. Do you have any other options? What are your other options?
8. If you end up in trouble, whom will you call?
9. If it doesn't work out and you have to return home, what will happen?
10. Is there someone at home who will listen if you can find the right way to let them know there's a problem and things need to change?
11. Do you know anyone else you can talk to - someone who can help you figure out a way?
12. Is it too dangerous for you to stay at home?



## what can I say or do to help the child or teen I care about?

Call the **Covenant House Nineline** at 1-800-999-9999; TTY: 1-800-999-9915 or follow this link to the **Nineline Forum on running away**. The Nineline staff is ready to talk with you any time of day.

**Other resources we recommend include:**

**Child Help USA**, 1-800-422-4453

**National Runaway Switchboard**, 1-800-621-4000