



Suicide
Prevention

Know how to help



1 Ask

If you see warning signs, ask if the person is having suicidal thoughts and if they need help.

Phrases to help jump start the conversation

- You haven't seemed like yourself lately. Is there something going on?
- I know you. Something is going on. Let's talk about it.
- Your stress level is off the charts. What's going on? I want to help.
- I'm worried about you. Are you ok?

2 Listen

Listen without judgement. Let the person talk without interruption & make them feel heard.

What to Listen for

- Specific reasons to live.
- Hope for the future/treatment.
- Therapy compliance/alliance.
- Ambivalence.
- Connections to faith (community)
- Support systems.
- Future orientation (school, jobs, children).

Avoid the following

- Minimizing the problem.
- Shaming a person.
- Sharing your opinion. Trying to convince a person suffering with a mental illness that it's not that bad.
- Avoid arguing/challenging the person.
- Avoid preaching/prophecy.

3 Respond

Respond with kindness and care. Always take the person seriously.

What to do

- Stay Calm
- Acknowledge that they are in pain & that their pain is REAL.
- Convey care
- Stay with the person
- Remove sharp objects or lethal means
- Go with the person to the ER or mental health clinic
- Call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-8255

Phrases that are helpful

- You are not alone. I'm here for you.
- I may not understand exactly how you feel, but I care about you and want to help.
- We will get through this together.

4 Follow-Up

Follow-up with the person and support their transition from crisis to recovery. Try to follow up within the first 24-48 hours after a crisis. You can help them overcome challenges after a suicidal crisis

- People often experience increased loneliness or despair.
- They may not have been given appropriate referrals for continuation of care or have access to professional care.
- They may not want to continue care (you can help encourage them to make their follow-up appointments)
- If you can, go to them. Meet at their home or where it's comfortable to them.
- Call them on the phone. A phone call is more personal than a text.
- Send a short text or email to check-in.