

September is Suicide Prevention Awareness Month

Say more, save a life



Talking about suicide is very important if you are worried about someone who may be struggling, or you feel suicidal. Discussing suicide does not make it more likely to happen. Showing you care helps reduce the risk of suicide.

How you can help someone who may be feeling suicidal

Having an open, supportive conversation can be a lifeline for a person who's thinking about ending their life.

Don't be afraid to be direct.

You might say, "I'm concerned about you, have you had thoughts about harming yourself?" The person may be relieved to talk about it. Try to stay calm and not seem too shocked. Do not be judgmental. Accept that their feelings are real and let them know you care.

Be a good listener.

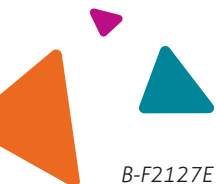
Pay attention and take them seriously. Make eye contact and don't interrupt. Be alert for any reasons they give for wanting to live. When they're finished, ask questions to ensure you understand what they said. Repeat what you heard, including anything they mentioned about what makes their life worth living.

Encourage and help them to seek support.

Tell them they deserve support and the most important thing they can do is speak to someone. You can say, "I know there are hotlines with trained counselors you can talk to confidentially. Would you like me to stay with you while you contact one?" Ask them if they have a plan. It may be scary to talk about, but a detailed plan contributes to a higher risk. Even if they don't have a plan, take all talk of suicide seriously.

Follow these tips to help someone get support

- Offer to text or call 988, the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline, together.
- Call or text 988 yourself if the person is unwilling to.
- Call 911 if there is an immediate risk of harm and tell the operator you need support for a mental health crisis.
- Stay with them until they are connected to help.



You are worthy of love and support.

If you are having suicidal thoughts

You are not alone. People from all walks of life have had suicidal thoughts at some point in their lives. While the pain may seem overwhelming and permanent, remember that crises are usually temporary. Give yourself the time necessary to allow things to change and the pain to subside.

Five steps to follow if you are feeling suicidal

- 1 **Promise not to do anything right now.** Thoughts and actions are two different things—your suicidal thoughts do not have to become a reality. Give yourself some distance between thoughts and actions.
- 2 **Avoid drugs and alcohol.** Suicidal thoughts can become more intense if you have taken drugs or alcohol.
- 3 **Make your home safe.** Remove things you could use to hurt yourself, such as pills, knives, razors or firearms. If you can't do that, go to a place where you feel safe.
- 4 **Do not let fear, shame or embarrassment prevent you from seeking help.** The first step in coping with suicidal thoughts and feelings is sharing them with someone you trust, (i.e., a family member, friend, therapist, clergy member or an experienced helpline counselor).
- 5 **Have hope.** People DO get through this. Even people who feel as badly as you do survive these feelings. No matter what you are experiencing, give yourself time to move through it, and don't try to go it alone.

Visit your member website for more information.