

Helping Someone with Suicidal Thoughts

It's important to know the risk factors and warning signs of those considering suicide so they can reach out and help when it is most needed.

Recognize the Signs

Most people considering suicide show one or more sign. Here's what you should know:

Know the risk factors	Watch for signs	Increase protective factors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Previous suicide attempt ● Engaging in self-injury ● History of psychiatric diagnosis ● Alcohol and other substance use disorders ● History of trauma or abuse ● Recent discharge from psychiatric inpatient treatment ● Major physical or chronic illnesses ● Family history of suicide ● Recent job or financial loss ● Recent loss of relationship ● Easy access to lethal means of self-harm ● Local clusters of suicide ● Lack of social support, healthcare, or mental health services ● Exposure to others who have died by suicide 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Talking about wanting to die or suicide ● Expressing hopelessness about the future ● Feeling like a burden to others ● Displaying overwhelming or severe emotional distress ● Loss of interest in activities or others ● Neglect of personal appearance or hygiene ● Increased alcohol or drug use ● Sudden mood changes ● Unbearable or chronic physical pain ● Changes in sleep ● Reckless behavior ● Increased agitation or irritability or revenge seeking behavior ● Personality change including expressing anger or hostility ● Withdrawal ● Giving away belongings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Access to effective clinical care for mental, physical, and substance use disorders ● Support through ongoing medical and mental health care relationships ● Restricted access to highly lethal means of suicide ● Strong connections to family and community support ● Increased skills in problem solving, conflict resolution and handling problems in a non-violent way

Tips on Talking with Someone in a Crisis

If you notice any of these signs or other changes in a peer or loved one:

1. Reach out to them and ask how they are doing. Plan a conversation with them when you have plenty of time and privacy.
2. Share the behaviors and changes that have concerned you.

3. Allow the person to share his or her concerns and thoughts and offer to help them find the appropriate resources.
4. Directly ask if the person is thinking about suicide. Asking about suicide does not increase a person's risk for suicide, to the contrary it can be a relief that they can share these thoughts with someone else.
5. Offer hope when they need it most. Your offer of unconditional support and encouragement can be crucial to a suicidal person.
6. Let the person know that help is available, and reassure them that their feelings are temporary and that you value his or her presence in your life.
7. If you feel the person is an immediate danger to themselves or someone else call campus police (610-861-1421) or dial 911.

Additional Prevention and Awareness Resources

- [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#)
- [SAVE: Suicide Awareness Voices of Education](#)
- [SuicidelsPreventable.org](#)
- [Suicide Prevention Resource Center](#)
- [American Foundation for Suicide Prevention](#)
- [The JED Foundation](#)
- [ULifeline](#)
- [Mental Health Screening](#)