

September is Suicide Prevention Awareness Month

Stop suicide, save a life

There is no single cause of suicide. Suicide usually occurs when stress and health problem come together and create an experience of hopelessness and despair. Are you afraid that someone you know may be at risk of suicide? Learn more about the warning signs and how to talk to someone struggling with their mental health.

Know the warning signs

It is hard to tell whether a person is thinking of suicide. Most people who take their own life show one or more warning signs, either through what they say or do.

Consider these **FACTS**:

- **Feelings:** Expressing hopelessness, talking about suicide or having no reason to live, showing moods such as depression, anxiety, irritability.
- **Actions:** Showing severe/overwhelming pain or distress, using drugs or alcohol, searching for ways to end their life.
- **Changes:** Withdrawing from activities, isolating from friends and family, sleeping more or less.
- **Threats:** Talking about, writing about or making plans to kill themselves.
- **Situations:** Going through stressful situations including loss, change, personal humiliation or difficulties at home, school or with the law.



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Take action

When someone says they are thinking about suicide or says things that sound as if they are considering suicide, it is important to pay attention and take action. Suicide is often preventable.

- **Ask and listen:** "Are you thinking about killing yourself?" is not an easy question, however, a study by the National Institute of Mental Health shows that asking at-risk individuals whether they are considering suicide may reduce rather than increase suicidal thoughts. Be willing to listen and discuss their feelings.
- **Keep them safe:** Reducing a person's access to highly lethal objects or places is an important part of suicide prevention. Asking if the at-risk person has a plan and removing access to lethal means can make a difference.
- **Get them help:** Connect with a trusted family member, friend or mental health professional. Call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline's (1-800-273-TALK (8255)) and the Crisis Text Line's number (741741). Save this number in your phone so it's there when you need it.
- **Stay connected:** Staying in touch after a crisis or discharge from care can make a difference. Let them know they matter and you care. Leave a message, send a text or call them.

If you are in crisis or considering suicide, or if someone you know is currently in danger, please dial 911 immediately. For non-emergencies, call your program for helpful resources.

Sources: AFSP.org, NIMH.NIH.gov, SPTSUSA.org