

How to save a life.



**Eight out of 10 young people
who take their own lives
give some warning to a
friend or family member.**

**Would you know what to do
if you were the person who was told?**

Know what to look for.

When asked who they would turn to if they were in emotional distress, most young people say they would reach out to a friend. The fact is, most people who are thinking of suicide don't really want to die. They just need someone to lead them toward a better solution. Are you prepared to recognize a friend in need and steer him toward help?

Learn to recognize the warning signs of suicide:

- Sense of hopelessness about the future
- Drastic changes in behavior or personality
- Uncharacteristic impulsiveness, recklessness or risk-taking
- Expressions of rage, uncontrolled anger, aggressive behavior
- Preoccupation with death, dying, or suicide through writing, talking or artwork
- Giving away prized possessions
- Loss of interest in personal appearance
- Increased use of alcohol or drugs
- Withdrawal from friends, family and society
- Extreme anxiety or agitation; inability to sleep or sleeping all the time
- A recent severe stressor, such as real or anticipated loss of a relationship, unplanned pregnancy, victim of bullying or family conflict.
- A previous suicide attempt or exposure to another's suicidal behavior
- Verbal signs such as:
 - *"I'm so tired. I don't feel like I can take this any longer."*
 - *"I don't want to be a bother anymore."*
 - *"I want you to know something, in case something happens to me."*

Know what to do.

Take it seriously. Ask what is going on and how you can help. Be persistent. Be willing to listen. Allow for expression of feelings. Be non-judgmental. Don't act shocked or angry as this creates distance. Let the person know that suicidal feelings are temporary and depression can be treated. Don't try to argue a person out of suicide. Don't be sworn to secrecy. Offer hope that alternatives are available. Keep talking.

Remind him that no matter how awful his problems seem, they can be worked out, and you are willing to help.

Ask questions. Don't be afraid to ask whether he is considering suicide. Be direct. Ask if he has a particular plan or method in mind. Talking openly about it is the first step toward help. It may be a relief to the person to know that it's all right to talk about it.

Get help.

- If you don't think the situation is life-threatening, try to get your friend to agree to talk to someone—a family member, physician, counselor or other mental health professional.
- If you feel that he may be in danger, immediately call someone who can help. A crisis line is a good place to start (see numbers on back). These people are trained to help resolve the crisis.
- Remove all lethal means from immediate access, including guns, pills, kitchen utensils, and ropes.
- If you think the person could act on thoughts of suicide, do not leave him alone until help is available.
- If the situation is life-threatening, go with the person to the nearest emergency room, walk-in clinic, or mental health treatment center.

Know where to get help.

Need help now?

If you're having thoughts of suicide or self-harm:

- Call 1-800-273-TALK (8255), a free, confidential 24-hour hotline available to anyone in suicidal crisis or emotional distress. Call for yourself or someone you care about, and get connected to help in your area.
- Text HELLO to 741741 from anywhere in the U.S. to text with a real-life trained crisis counselor. The free, 24/7 text line is available to anyone in suicidal crisis or emotional distress.
- You can also dial 911 or go to the nearest emergency room.
- The Trevor Project offers a 24-hour toll-free confidential crisis and suicide prevention helpline for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning youth. Call 1-866-488-7386.
- The National Alliance on Mental Illness has an information and referral line to help you find resources like support groups, psychologists, and psychiatric hospitals. Call (214) 341-7133* Monday – Friday, 10 a.m. – 6 p.m. EST.

For information about depression, suicide and mental health resources, we suggest:

Grant Halliburton Foundation

GrantHalliburton.org
(972) 744-9790

Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance

dballiance.org
(817) 654-7100

National Institute of Mental Health

nimh.nih.gov
(866) 615-6464*

National Alliance on Mental Illness

nami.org
(214) 341-7133*

Mental Health America

nmha.org
(214) 871-2420

Depression Screening

tinyurl.com/mha-screening

Half of Us

Online resource for college youth
halfofus.com

Here For Texas

Searchable database of Texas resources
herefortexas.com

**Spanish available*



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