



Suicide – talking about it

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When a friend confides in you that they are having suicidal thoughts, you can feel helpless and distressed. How do you let them know you care about them and want to help? Here are some tips on how to talk about suicide so that your friend can tell that you are genuine and non-judgemental.

If your friend says something like:

- “I’ve had enough. There’s no point in living.”
- “No one will even miss me when I’m gone.”
- “Everyone will be better off without me.”

Do take them seriously. *There is no evidence to suggest that by asking a suicidal person if they are thinking about ending their life, you will actually put the idea in their head. On the contrary, it can be a relief for them to bring it out in the open.*

Do ask like this: “Are you thinking of suicide?”

Don’t ask like this: “You’re not going to do something stupid, are you?”

Don’t respond saying:

- “That’s nonsense, life can’t be that bad.”
- “Everything will be better in the morning.”
- “You’re just trying to get attention.”

Stay around. People rarely suicide when they have company. Do stay in touch. Even a daily text message can be a welcome sign that you matter to someone.

Openly enquire about how things are:

- “How’s life treating you at the moment?”
- “I notice you’re quieter than usual, is something the matter?”
- “You say you’re fine but you sound really flat.”

Rather than offer advice, show you have listened. Aim to get help. Let your friend know you won’t abandon them.

- “I’m worried about you and I want to be able to help you.”
- “We can find a way together to work out a solution.”
- “No matter what you say, I’m going to stick by you.”

You can find help here:

- Call 000 if urgent help is needed
- Take your friend to their GP or hospital emergency department
- Lifeline 24 hour crisis counselling ☎13 11 14 www.lifeline.org.au
- Suicide 24 hour call back service ☎1300 659 467
- SANE helpline for mental illness & suicide information ☎1800 187 236
- www.youthbeyondblue.com Kids Helpline ☎1800 551 800
- LIFE – www.livingisforeveryone.com.au 24 factsheets on suicide

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