What You Can Do To Help

Begin a dialogue by asking questions. Suicidal thoughts are common with some mental illnesses. Listen with concern and without passing judgment. Ask:

• “Are you O.K.?”
• “Do you ever feel so badly that you think about suicide?”
• “Do you have a plan to die by suicide or take your life?”
• “Have you thought about when or how you would do it?”

Do not leave them alone.
If the person has a suicide plan, stay with them. If they have attempted suicide before, they are at a greater risk.

Stay calm.
Offer hope that they will not always feel this way. Hope saves lives.

Follow through.
Tell a trusted adult and get help from a mental health professional. Always take thoughts or plans for suicide seriously. Remember, never keep a plan for suicide a secret.

If you think the person is not in immediate danger, acknowledge the pain is legitimate and offer to work together to get help.
Recognizing Depression

In most cases the depression that so often precedes suicide is both recognizable and treatable. **If someone has several of the following symptoms**, lasting for at least two weeks, help should be sought from a physician or mental health professional:

- Loss of interest or pleasure in ordinary activities
- Persistent sad, anxious, or "empty" mood
- Declining school performance
- Feelings of hopelessness or desperation
- Feelings of guilt, worthlessness, shame
- Decreased energy, fatigue, and feeling "slowed down"
- Restlessness and irritability, increased anger/fighting
- Decreased ability to concentrate, remember, make decisions

Suicide Danger Signals

**Observable signs of serious depression**

- Unrelenting low mood
- Hopelessness
- Withdrawal
- Irritability
- Preoccupation with death

**Recent impulsiiveness and taking unnecessary risks**

**Threatening suicide or expressing a strong wish to die**

**Suddenly happier, calmer**

**Unexpected rage or anger**

**Making a plan:**

- Giving away prized possessions
- Unusual visiting or calling friends/loved ones
- Sudden or impulsive purchase of a firearm
- Obtaining other means of killing oneself such as poisons or medications
- Preparing to leave family/friends behind

**Change in sleeping patterns**

**Change in appetite or weight**

**Increased alcohol and/or drug use**

**Thoughts of death, suicide, or wishes to be dead**

**Becoming socially isolated, or less time with friends**

**Constant anxiety or tension**

**ANGER/FIGHTING**

**Increased alcohol and/or other drug use**