

TOOLKIT Helping someone at risk of suicide

If you are concerned that someone you know is considering suicide, support is available for both you and your loved one. Suicide is preventable and starting a conversation with someone you're worried about can save a life.

Why does someone consider suicide?

Thoughts of suicide can occur for many people for a range of reasons. People considering suicide may be feeling isolated and alone. They may feel that nobody can help or understand them and that suicide is the only way out of the difficulties they are experiencing.



I'm worried someone I care about is considering suicide. What do I do?

1 Acknowledge your own reaction

Talking about suicide can feel overwhelming, especially if you are worried about a loved one. Before reaching out to check in on others, it's first important to check in with yourself to ensure you are feeling able to have this important conversation. Whatever your reaction or feelings, it's important to be aware of these before reaching out to support others. Getting some support for yourself, thinking about what you will say and having a plan may assist you. Speak with a trusted friend or professional, or contact services such as Lifeline for additional support. You don't have to bear this responsibility alone.

2 Ask directly

Unless someone tells you, the only way to know if a person is thinking of suicide is to directly ask. Asking the question shows that you have noticed things, been listening, that you care and that they're not alone. Talking about suicide will not put the idea into their head but will encourage them to talk about their feelings. Most people thinking about suicide don't necessarily want to die but just need someone to help them. With the right support, recovery is possible and they can go on to lead meaningful and fulfilling lives.

3 Be there and listen

Listening to the person is essential to showing them that you care and that you want to understand what they are going through. Let them do most of the talking without offering any judgements or advice. Stay with them and work with them to ensure they aren't alone – that might mean physically staying with them or finding someone else they trust to be there with them.



Ready to help 24/7

13 11 14
Call

0477 13 11 14
Text

lifeline.org.au
Online chat



4 Check out their safety

You may need to ask the person some more questions to understand their safety and if there is any immediate danger. Asking the person:

- Do they have a specific plan on how they will end their life?
- Are they able to carry out this plan (for example do they have access to a weapon, car, drugs, medicines)?

If possible, try removing these objects as this can also help keep the person safe.

For 24/7 telephone crisis support call 13 11 14.
For more information visit www.lifeline.org.au

This Toolkit has been produced by the Lifeline Information Service as a public service. You are welcome to reproduce it without alteration and with acknowledgement of Lifeline.

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5 Get help

If someone's life is in danger, call 000.

Other services that can offer support include:

- Lifeline by phoning 13 11 14, texting 0477 13 11 14 or online chat <https://www.lifeline.org.au/crisis-chat/>
- 13YARN (13 92 76) Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Crisis Supporters to yarn to 24/7 from any mobile or pay phone.
- Kids Helpline 1800 55 1800
- MensLine Australia 1300 78 99 78
- The Suicide Call Back Service 1300 659 467
- Speaking with someone that they trust
- Accessing help from a healthcare professional such as a GP, a counsellor or other mental health professional

Encourage the person to get help and to reach out for support. They don't have to go through this alone.

Supporting others having a difficult time can also impact you. Remember, you don't have to take on all of this responsibility by yourself. It's important for you to have a strong support network around you too.

6 Follow up

After you've had this important first conversation, it's important to check in with the person soon afterwards to show them that you care, but also that you're serious about supporting them. Showing them that you're there for them can make all the difference. Ask them some questions about what support they have involved and offer to help them however they might need, for example to attend any appointments.

Reminding them that while you don't know how they're feeling exactly, you want to help them get through this difficult time. Offering them hope that this difficult time will pass and there is help available to them. They're not in this alone.

For additional resources about discussing suicide visit Conversation Matters

<https://conversationsmatter.org.au/>



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