



- ✓ **Show respect.** Validate their emotions. Their pain is real. Don't say things could be worse or they have everything to live for. Don't use the words "commit suicide." Saying "attempt or complete suicide" is less offensive.
- ✓ **Delay their actions.** Try to get them to live one more day. Plan something they can look forward to.
- ✓ **Remove dangerous items.** Take away weapons or potentially harmful things.
- ✓ **Discourage self-medicating.** This includes alcohol, recreational and prescription drugs.
- ✓ **Act in a crisis. If someone is in immediate danger, call 911.** They may need to temporarily be hospitalized. Don't take them to the ER alone. An irrational act on their part could endanger both of you.
- ✓ **Request a wellness check.** If you're worried and can't get to the person, call the local police for a wellness check.

#### KEEP IN MIND

If someone chooses to take their life, you're not responsible. But while they're in danger, you can help by showing them they're loved, wanted, and important, and encourage them to choose life.

# Responding to Someone Who May Be Considering Suicide

Is suicide preventable?  
The question is crucial.

Suicide occurs when a person is not thinking rationally, when a series of events and physiological stressors collide to make them feel so hopeless that their physical or emotional pain becomes too much to bear, and they believe death is the only escape.

### IS SUICIDE PREVENTABLE?

The answer is yes and no. We can offer those in danger hope and encourage them to choose to live another day. Many times, *just one more day* is all it takes to allow those desperate emotions to calm down.

### WHAT TO WATCH FOR

Here are some of the warning signs most, not all, people give out.

A person may:

- talk about dying, express a longing for death
- make a will, say goodbye, give away prized possessions
- show signs of severe depression and anxiety, neglect appearance
- have unexplained anger, aggression, irritability
- have a change in personality, seem happy after being severely depressed
- use drugs or alcohol or relapse after recovery
- participate in risk-taking behavior

### DON'T BE AFRAID TO ASK

Studies have shown asking someone if they are considering taking their life does not increase the chances of it happening. It gives an opportunity to share their feelings and may reduce the risk. The question can also put them in a more rational frame of mind.

Asking can be awkward. Do it anyway. But ask in private, kindly and respectfully.

### Here are some questions to start with:

1. How are you dealing with things that have happened?
2. Do you ever feel like giving up? Have you thought about suicide or made a plan?
3. Do you have access to weapons, drugs, or other things to hurt yourself?

### HELPFUL RESOURCES

Here are some things you can do for someone you suspect is at risk:

- ✓ **Give them the suicide and crisis hotline number. Have them call 988.** Tell them many people experience these feelings and it's important to talk to someone who can help.
- ✓ **Find them support.** Help them reach out to a therapist, clergy, or support group.
- ✓ **Check in consistently.** Be there, care, and listen.
- ✓ **Offer hope.** Remind them of what's important to them. Bring up anyone who counts on them and anything they care about to give them a reason to stick around.