

SUICIDE AWARENESS

1-800-273-TALK (8255) Prevention Lifeline

WARNING SIGNS FROM A SUICIDAL PERSON

Talking about suicide; obsession with death
Feelings of helplessness or hopelessness
Saying goodbye or getting affairs in order
Withdrawing from friends and family
Making plans
Self-destructive behavior
Sudden sense of calm

PREVENTION TIPS – HOW YOU CAN HELP

- #1 Speak up if you spot warning signs and are worried. Express your concerns to the person. Ask how you can help. Let them know they are not alone. Be sympathetic and accepting of their feelings.
- #2 Respond quickly if the person has a specific suicide plan and the means to carry it out. Call a crisis center or 911. Do not leave them alone.
- #3 Let them know you care - offer support by listening and being empathetic.
- #4 Call a crisis line for advice and referral. Talk with a trusted adult about your concerns.
- #5 Be proactive. Help the suicidal person get help and follow-up care. Work out a safety plan to help them through a crisis.

Common misconceptions about suicide

FALSE: People who talk about suicide won't really do it.

Almost everyone who commits or attempts suicide has given some clue or warning. Do not ignore suicide threats. Statements like "you'll be sorry when I'm dead," "I can't see any way out," — no matter how casually or jokingly said, may indicate serious suicidal feelings.

FALSE: Anyone who tries to kill him/herself must be crazy.

Most suicidal people are not psychotic or insane. They must be upset, grief-stricken, depressed or despairing, but extreme distress and emotional pain are not necessarily signs of mental illness.

FALSE: If a person is determined to kill him/herself, nothing is going to stop them.

Even the most severely depressed person has mixed feelings about death, wavering until the very last moment between wanting to live and wanting to die. Most suicidal people do not want death; they want the pain to stop. The impulse to end it all, however overpowering, does not last forever.

FALSE: People who commit suicide are people who were unwilling to seek help.

Studies of suicide victims have shown that more than half had sought medical help in the six months prior to their deaths.

FALSE: Talking about suicide may give someone the idea.

You don't give a suicidal person morbid ideas by talking about suicide. The opposite is true—bringing up the subject of suicide and discussing it openly is one of the most helpful things you can do.

Source: *SAVE – Suicide Awareness Voices of Education*