What to do

Here are some ways to be helpful to someone who is thinking about suicide:

Be direct. Talk openly and matter‐of‐factly about suicide.

Be willing to listen. Allow expressions of feelings.

Accept the feelings.

Be non‐judgmental. Don’t debate whether suicide is right or wrong, or whether feelings are good or bad.

Don’t lecture on the value of life.

Get involved. Become available.

Show interest and support.

Don’t dare him or her to do it.

Don’t act shocked. This will put distance between you.

Don’t be sworn to secrecy. Seek support.

Offer hope that alternatives are available, but do not offer glib reassurance.

Take action. Remove means, such as guns or stockpiled pills.

Get help from persons or agencies specializing in crisis intervention and suicide prevention.

AVAILABLE RESOURCES

When a person is in crisis he or she may have difficulty identifying people/organizations within the community who can provide assistance and support. Below is a list of such persons and organizations. Please contact them if you or someone you know needs help.

PROFESSIONAL SOURCES OF HELP

• community mental health agency
• private therapist or counselor
• member of the clergy
• family physician
• suicide prevention or crisis center

ADDITIONAL SOURCES OF HELP

24‐Hour Mental Health Crisis Team
(216) 623‐6888

Human Services Information & Referral
(216) 436‐2000

Lesbian/Gay Community Service Center
(216) 651‐5428

FOR MORE INFORMATION

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention
www.afsp.org

Suicide Awareness Voices of Education (SAVE)
www.save.org

National Strategy for Suicide Prevention
www.mentalhealth.org/suicideprevention
Symptoms of Depression

• Persistent sad or “empty” mood.
• Feeling hopeless, helpless, worthless, pessimistic and/or guilty.
• Fatigue or loss of interest in ordinary activities, including sex.
• Disturbances in eating and sleeping patterns.
• Irritability, increased crying, anxiety or panic attacks.
• Difficulty concentrating, remembering or making decisions.
• Thoughts of suicide; suicide plans or attempts.
• Persistent physical symptoms or pains that do not respond to treatment.

While the symptoms specified above generally characterize major depression, there are other disorders with similar characteristics. Remember that only a doctor or mental health professional can diagnose depression.

Risk Factors

• Previous suicide attempt(s)
• History of mental disorders, particularly depression.
• Isolation, a feeling of being cut off from other people.
• History of alcohol and substance abuse.
• Family history of suicide or violence.
• Feelings of hopelessness.
• Impulsive or aggressive tendencies.
• Loss (relational, social, work, or financial).
• Physical illness.
• Unwillingness to seek help because of the stigma attached to mental health and substance abuse disorders or suicidal thoughts.

The first step in preventing suicide is to understand and identify the risk factors. A risk factor is anything that increases the likelihood that someone will harm themselves. However, risk factors are not necessarily causes.

Research suggests that approximately 40% of those who die by suicide suffer from a depressive disorder. Not all people with depression will show all symptoms or have them to the same degree. If a person has four or more symptoms, for more than two weeks, consult a medical doctor or psychiatrist.

Know the Signs of Suicide.

Are you or someone you love at risk of suicide?
Seek help as soon as possible if you should witness, hear, or see someone you know exhibiting any one or more of the following warning signs or have concerns that they may harm themselves.

Symptoms of Depression

Warning Signs for Suicide

• Talking about suicide.
• Statements about guilt or worthlessness.
• Preoccupation with death.
• Loss of interest in things one cares about.
• Withdrawing from friends, family and society.
• No reason for living; no sense of purpose in life.
• Feeling trapped - like there’s no way out.
• Dramatic mood changes.
• Anxiety, agitation, unable to sleep or sleeping all the time.
• Rage, uncontrolled anger, seeking revenge.
• Acting reckless or engaging in risky activities.
• Increased alcohol or drug use.
• Making arrangements; setting one’s affairs in order.

HELPING PEOPLE IN NEED EVERYDAY.

216.623.6888