

ADVICE FOR FAMILY AND FRIENDS:

What To Do When You Suspect Someone May Be at Risk for Suicide

Take it Seriously

- 50% to 75% of all people who attempt suicide tell someone about their intention.
- If someone you know shows the warning signs above, the time to act is now.

Ask Questions

- Begin by telling the suicidal person you are concerned about them.
- Tell them specifically what they have said or done that makes you feel concerned about suicide.
- Don't be afraid to ask whether the person is considering suicide, and whether they have a particular plan or method in mind. These questions will not push them toward suicide if they were not considering it.
- Ask if they are seeing a clinician or are taking medication so the treating person can be contacted.
- Do not try to argue someone out of suicide. Instead, let them know that you care, that they are not alone and that they can get help. Avoid pleading and preaching to them with statements such as, "You have so much to live for," or "Your suicide will hurt your family."

Encourage Professional Help

- Actively encourage the person to see a physician or mental health professional immediately.
- People considering suicide often believe they cannot be helped. If you can, assist them to identify a professional and schedule an appointment. If they will let you, go to the appointment with them.

Take Action

- If the person is threatening, talking about, or making specific plans for suicide, this is a crisis requiring immediate attention. Do not leave the person alone.
- Remove any firearms, drugs, or sharp objects that could be used for suicide from the area.
- Take the person to a walk-in clinic at a psychiatric hospital or a hospital emergency room.
- If these options are not available, call 911 or the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255) for assistance.

Follow-Up on Treatment

- Still skeptical that they can be helped, the suicidal person may need your support to continue with treatment after the first session.
- If medication is prescribed, support the person to take it exactly as prescribed. Be aware of possible side effects, and notify the person who prescribed the medicine if the suicidal person seems to be getting worse, or resists taking the medicine. The doctor can often adjust the medications or dosage to work better for them.