

Whether you are a neighbor, classmate, or friend, you can be there for someone working through hard stuff. Sometimes the hard stuff can be as big as someone having thoughts of self-harm or suicide. If this happens, there is a lot you can do to help AND you don't have to do any of it alone!



Even the most skilled professionals who are experts in suicide prevention would not be able to solve the situation in one conversation.



There might be times when someone does not want your help. In these situations, knowing when and how to seek guidance from suicide prevention and mental health resources is vital and will help you as you try to connect someone to the care and protection they need.



What YOU Can Do

ASK:

- **Suspect someone might be thinking about suicide? You can ask them.**
- **You won't encourage someone to consider suicide just by asking them about it. Instead, you are giving them a way to talk about it instead of acting on it.**

LISTEN:

- **Give someone space to talk without fear of judgement. This is one of the most powerful ways to help someone.**
- **Listen without jumping in and giving suggestions. If you offer too many solutions, you might sound like you are passing judgement on their feelings.**

KNOW COURAGE WHEN YOU SEE IT:

- **Thank them for trusting you. It takes a lot of courage to tell someone about suicidal thoughts.**
- **Tell a friend that you can't agree to keep their secret. It takes courage to tell someone that you can't agree to keep their secret if they are suicidal and need help.**

HELP TAKE SOME OF THE PRESSURE OFF:

- **Offer to go for a walk together or share a playlist. These can be useful for taking a mental break.**
- **Don't agree to keep secrets if a friend is suicidal - that is a promise you can't keep.**



How to help as a peer - you don't have to do this alone.



Action Words	Skills for Getting Help	Myths	Facts
Explore	Active listening in a non judgmental way provides a safe space where things can be shared openly.	People who say they are having thoughts of hurting themselves don't mean it and won't actually do anything.	Not everyone who talks about suicide is going to follow through, but if they have the tools to follow through (weapon or medication) then they are at a higher risk.
Know the Signs	If someone has a plan for how to harm themselves, they need more help than you can give them.	When people do things to hurt themselves and it doesn't seem serious they're probably just seeking attention and there's really no cause for concern.	It is serious anytime someone hurts themselves, and there needs to be attention and support provided for that person.
Offer and Support Connections	There are lots of ways to get help. Suicide hotlines, crisis centers, and local emergency rooms can help if they need immediate support.	There's no point in reaching out to help someone. If they want to hurt themselves, they'll always find a way.	Reaching out is a really great way to help someone. Listening can show that you care. Don't forget, there are resources and hotlines available, like the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (988)
Checking in	Circle back and check in after supporting someone. For instance, if someone took the next steps to see a therapist, you can check in with them after that appointment. A call or a text can make a big difference.	People will try to hurt themselves without any warning signs and it will happen out of the blue, pretty much at random.	Actually, there are warning signs that a person may give. Some include changes in behavior like isolating from friends or frequently missing school or activities. Check out the rest of this resource for when you might want to ask someone about suicide or self-harm.

