



HOW TO HELP SOMEONE WHO IS STRUGGLING

Many people are afraid to talk about suicide, but it is often a great relief to someone thinking about suicide to know that you have noticed their pain. If you are worried that someone you know may be suicidal, here are a few ways to help.



Listen

Listening to someone can show that you care, give them a greater feeling of control, and help them feel connected to someone else. One way to invite conversation is by using open-ended questions, such as “What brought these feelings on?” or “What do you normally do when you feel like this?” Make sure to demonstrate that you’re an active, attentive, and empathetic listener by validating their feelings: “It takes a lot of courage to talk about this and I’m here to listen.” or “You shouldn’t have to go through this alone.”



Ask

Asking about suicide can be scary, but it is very important. Research shows that asking about suicide will not suggest the idea to someone. After you have listened for a while, ask directly: “I’m concerned about you. Are you thinking about killing yourself?” If the answer is yes, keep listening. Then ask follow-up questions about their plan: “Have you thought about how you might take your life? Do you already have the means (guns, pills, etc.) available? Have you decided when/where you will do this?”



Get Help

A suicidal person needs a lot of support – more than any one person can give. Even if the person does not have a plan, get help from a counselor, a teacher, an emergency room, a medical professional, or crisis center. If the person you are concerned about has set a plan for a suicide attempt, try to stay calm. If you are not with the person, go get them or find someone who can stay with them. Finally, call 911 or another professional who can help immediately.



Support for young people, by young people.
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