

What You Need to Know to Help a Friend or Family Member



Warning Signs

Concerning Behaviors

- Expressed desire or intention to hurt or kill oneself
- Seeking ways to kill oneself (e.g., seeking access to firearms, pills, or other means)
- Talking or writing about death, dying or suicide, when these actions are out of the ordinary
- Increased substance (alcohol or drug) use
- Acting reckless or engaging in risky activities
- Giving away prized possessions or seeking long-term care for pets

Notable Changes in Behavior

- Changes in:
 - Overall energy level
 - Sleeping habits
 - Eating habits
- Loss of interest in most activities
- Withdrawal from friends and family
- Neglect of health and self-care
- Sudden change in physical appearance and/or personality

Changes in Mood

- Appearing depressed or sad most of the time
- Feeling:
 - Hopeless
 - Helpless or trapped
 - Excessive guilt or shame
 - Strong anger or rage

Communicating Your Concern

Using “I” statements, communicate concern about specific and observable behavior:

For Example: *“I have noticed that you have been drinking more than usual.”*

Listen and communicate empathy, thinking about how the person may feel:

For Example: *“Work sounds really overwhelming right now.”*

Asking About Thoughts of Suicide

It is critical to directly ask: “Are you thinking about suicide?”

For Example: *“Sometimes when someone feels trapped, like there is no way out of a situation, they begin having thoughts about suicide. I really care about you and want to support you; are you thinking about suicide?”*

If they say yes, ask if they have a plan, materials, and timeline.

Asking will NOT plant the idea in someone’s mind.

Resources

If you or someone you know is in a crisis, call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at **1-800-273-8255** or text “4HOPE” to the Crisis Text Line at **741-741**

To learn more and to participate in a local training on how to help someone who may be considering suicide, visit the Franklin County Suicide Prevention Coalition’s website at **www.franklincountyspc.org**

-Franklin County Hotline: **614-221-5445**

-Alcohol, Drug, & Mental Health Board of Franklin County: **adamhfranklin.org/find-help/suicide-prevention**

-Netcare Access: **614-276-2273** **www.netcareaccess.org**

-Franklin County Youth Psychiatric Crisis Line: **614-722-1800**

-Nationwide Children’s Hospital: **www.nationwidechildrens.org**



Source: American Academy of Suicidology