

Is someone you know considering suicide?

If you are concerned that someone you know may be thinking of committing suicide, you can help.

Possible Warning Signs

- Talking about death and dying, or suicide
- No hope for the future
- Experiencing depression (**feelings of hopelessness, helplessness**)
- Recent loss – through death, relationship break-up, termination from course, loss of job etc
- Low self esteem, feeling worthless, shame
- Withdrawing from family and friends, isolation
- Change in eating habits (eating more or less than usual), sleep patterns, behaviour (can't concentrate), personality (less sociable, sad, withdrawn)
- Increased substance abuse
- A previous suicide or self-harm attempt
- **Giving prized possessions away**
- **Decreased interest in previous pleasurable activities**
- **Lack of interest in personal appearance**

Triggers of Suicide

- Recent loss e.g., relationship break-up, death, termination from course, isolation from family due to relocation, loss of job etc
- A sense of failure at university
- A sense of failure about romantic relationships
- Family or relationship conflict
- Sexual assault or child abuse
- Domestic violence or a possessive partner

How You Can Help

- Sit and listen to the person. Show signs of empathy and understanding. Do not tell the person that they should not feel the way they feel, acknowledge their despair, sadness or fears.
- Ask the person, "Are you thinking of suicide?" Ask them if they have a plan and if they have the means. Fact: Asking someone about suicide will not put the idea in their mind. Most likely, they will be relieved. Individuals contemplating suicide do not wish to die, they just wish for the pain to end.
- Take all suicide threats seriously.
- Suggest that the person go to a GP for a physical. There may be a medical problem that requires help, or the GP can refer patients to a psychiatrist or psychologist, where necessary.
- Suggest to them that there are other ways to solve the problem besides suicide. Try to get the person to talk to a counsellor or psychologist. Address reluctance by saying that it is a sign of personal strength to seek to deal with personal difficulties.

Myths about Suicide

- *People who talk about suicide never attempt or complete suicide*
Talking about suicide can be a plea for help and a late sign in the progression toward a suicide attempt. Most people that commit suicide have spoken of their intention first.
- *Attempted or completed suicides happen without warning*
Eight out of ten people that complete suicide give warning and there are warning signs to look out for.
- *People who threaten suicide are just seeking attention*
All suicide intents or attempts must be taken seriously because the behaviour has the potential to lead to death.
- *Talking about suicide or asking if someone is suicidal will put the idea in their head*
False. The person is likely to feel relieved and this may be a first step toward obtaining help for the person.

Where to Get Help

- Local community health centre
- University counselling service
Location: Bentley Campus, Building 109
Telephone: +61 8 9266 7850 FREECALL 1800 651 878
TTY: (08) 9266 4112
Fax: +61 8 9266 3052
- Telephone counselling services
 - Lifeline, Ph: 131 114,
 - Suicide Emergency Line, The Samaritans, Ph: 9381 5555 or 1800 198 313
 - Crisis Care 9223 1111 or 1800 199 008

Websites

- www.beyondblue.org.au
- www.sane.org
- www.reachout.com.au/suicide
- www.metanoia.org/suicide

Reading

- *“Suicide why? 85 questions and answers about suicide”* by Adina Wroblewski
- *“Suicide: The forever decision: For those thinking about suicide, and for those who know, love, or counsel them”* by Paul G. Quinnett
- *“Understanding depression”* by Maria Prendergast
- *“Choosing to live – how to defeat suicide through cognitive therapy”* by Thomas E. Ellis & Cory F. Newman