

ACT now to stop a suicide

What to look for – and what to do – if you are concerned about someone

WHAT TO LOOK FOR—Check All That Apply

Part I: Suicide Risk Questionnaire

Have you heard someone say:

- I can't fail this class – my whole life is on the line
- I'll never fit in; nobody would want to be my friend anyway
- I can't stand the pressure anymore
- Take my CD player and CDs – I don't need this stuff anymore
- Life isn't worth living
- I won't be around to deal with that
- If he/she breaks up with me, I can't/won't go on
- Nobody understands me – nobody feels the way I do
- There's nothing I can do to make it better

- Next time I'll take enough pills to do the job right
- My family would be better off without me
- I feel there is no way out

Have you observed:

- Excessive interest in music, books, or movies about suicide
- Giving away prized possessions of personal or monetary value
- Total disregard for self, hygiene, dress, activities, etc.
- Signs of planning a suicide such as obtaining a weapon, stock-piling pills, writing farewell letters/e-mails or suicide note

Part II: Depression Risk Questionnaire

Have you noticed the following signs of depression:

- Depressed mood
- Change in sleeping patterns (too much/little, disturbances)
- Change in weight or appetite
- Speaking and/or moving with unusual speed or slowness
- Loss of interest or pleasure in usual activities
- Withdrawal from family and friends
- Fatigue or loss of energy
- Diminished ability to think or concentrate, slowed thinking or indecisiveness

- Feelings of worthlessness, self-reproach, or guilt
- Thoughts of death, suicide, or wishes to be dead

If depression seems possible, have you also noticed:

- Extreme anxiety, agitation, or enraged behavior
- Racing thoughts, excessive energy, reduced need for sleep
- Excessive drug and/or alcohol use or abuse
- Neglect of physical health
- Feelings of hopelessness or depression

Questionnaire Interpretation-If you checked circles under:

Part I only: Your friend may be at risk for suicide and should seek professional help immediately.

Part II only: Your friend may be suffering from depression and should seek further evaluation with a mental health professional or his or her primary care physician.

Parts I and II: The suicide risk is even higher: strongly encourage your friend to seek professional help immediately.



Created by Screening for Mental Health, Inc. with educational facts adapted from material provided by the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP) and the American College Health Association (ACHA). Consultants: Ross J. Baldessarini, M.D. and Kay R. Jamison, Ph.D. We thank everyone for their continued support.

WHAT TO DO if you suspect someone you care about is considering suicide

ACT: Acknowledge, Care and find Treatment.

1. Acknowledge

- **Do take it seriously.**
70% of all people who commit suicide give some warning of their intentions to a friend or family member.
- **Do be willing to listen.**
Even if professional help is needed, your friend or loved one will be more willing to seek help if you have listened to him or her.

2. Care

- **Do voice your concern.**
Take the initiative to ask what is troubling your friend, co-worker, or loved one, and attempt to overcome any reluctance on their part to talk about it.
- **Do let the person know you care and understand.**
Reassure your friend or loved one that he or she is not alone. Explain that, although powerful, suicidal feelings are temporary, depression can be treated, and problems can be solved.

3. Treatment

- **Do get professional help immediately.**
Bring your friend to your campus health or counseling center, a local hospital emergency room or crisis center (if your friend is already in treatment, contact his or her clinician).

OR

- **Call your campus emergency services or 1-800-273-TALK.**
The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, 1-800-273-TALK (8255), is a free service available 24/7 to provide assistance during a suicidal crisis or to provide mental health information and referrals.
- **If the person seems unwilling to accept treatment...**
Call the campus police or 911 if your friend is in immediate danger.

If for any reason you are unsure, uncomfortable, or unable to take action, find a trusted adult with whom to share your concerns.

What NOT to do...

- **Don't** try to cheer the person up, or tell them to snap out of it.
- **Don't** assume the situation will take care of itself.
- **Don't** be sworn to secrecy.
- **Don't** argue or debate moral issues.
- **Don't** risk your personal safety. If the person acts in a threatening way, just leave, and then call the police.

Did you know that...

- Almost **5,000 people** between the **ages of 15 and 24 kill themselves** every year – the **majority are men**.
- Nearly **50% of suicide** victims have a **positive blood alcohol** level.
- Although most depressed people are not suicidal, **most suicidal people are depressed**.
- **70%** of people who **commit suicide tell someone** about it in advance, and **most are not in treatment**.
- **Serious depression** can be manifested in obvious sadness, but often is expressed instead as a **loss of pleasure or withdrawal from activities** that were once enjoyable.