

## **Helping Someone in Suicidal Crisis**

If someone you know is considering suicide or you see warning signs for suicidality, the most important thing to do is respond. Talking with someone about suicide will not make them do it. Your response to their emotional distress will be a relief in most cases- being someone who cared enough to ask and to talk openly and calmly about suicide. You can help prevent suicide.



Ask clearly and calmly about suicide- “Are you feeling suicidal?” or “Are you having thoughts of suicide?”

Ask if they have a plan- “Do you have a plan for how you would end your life?” “How were you planning to attempt suicide?” Ask if they have any additional plans for suicide. If the answer is YES, then...

Ask about the method- “How were you planning to end your life?” (how, what, when, where)

Ask about means access- Is the means (method for suicide) accessible or available? Take action to restrict or remove access to lethal means for suicide.

The more specific the plan and timeline, the more risk for suicide is involved. You do not have to help alone in a suicidal crisis- seek additional support from professionals and a nationally accredited Suicide Prevention Crisis Center such as WellSpace Health’s, or call our Suicide Prevention Crisis Line: **(916) 368-3111** or **1-800-273-8255**. You can also give these numbers to the person at risk of suicide as a 24 hour means of confidential support and intervention. ***We are here to help.***

Talk with the person about their reasons for dying and what is hurting so much- it won’t make it worse to talk about it, it’s often times helpful in reducing the level of emotional distress and psychological pain they are experiencing and helps them feel understood and a sense of relief to have someone to talk with about it. Avoid simplistic answers, use of guilt or shame, jokes, or other similar unhelpful responses as these can be hurtful and make matters worse.

Ask the person about who they feel they can turn to for support typically- sources of support. Also explore internal resources such as coping mechanisms, values, faith, self care, etc.

Connect the person with supports that can provide ongoing professional mental health support—a therapist, a physician, psychiatrist, and other means of support they trust. *Always offer the suicide prevention crisis lines.*

If the person refuses help or intervention, and you believe them to be at risk- do not leave them alone. Seek assistance from your local Suicide Prevention Crisis Line or contact 911 if there is a suicide in progress. Don’t keep suicide a secret. It’s understandable to be concerned about betraying a trust with someone you care about, but the main goal is to protect life.

To learn more, call the **Suicide Prevention Crisis Line at (916)368-3111 or 1-800-273-8255**. To learn about trainings available for suicide intervention skills, call the Crisis Center Business Office at (916)368-3118.

***Hope starts here.***