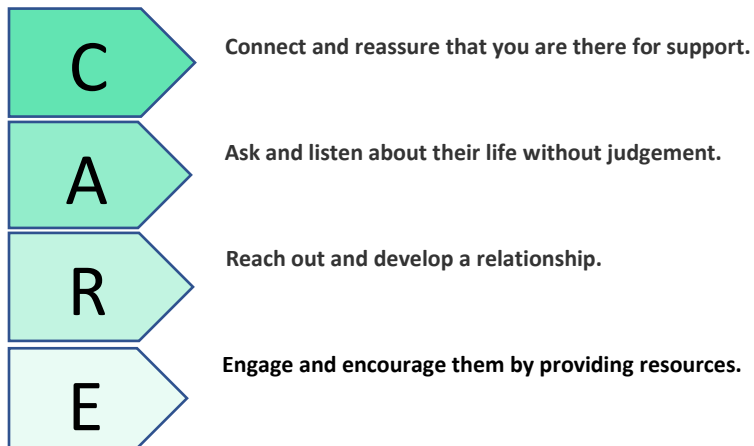


## *For our students contemplating suicide:*



Suicide is a troubling topic that most of us would rather not deal with, but suicide is a reality, and it is more common than we would like to think.

- Suicide is the third leading cause of death for young people.
- One young person age 15-24 dies by suicide every two hours and three minutes.
- On average, there are 123 suicides per day.
- Having a mental illness can increase the chances of suicide.

Many times, suicidal actions are a desperate “cry for help” and many suicides can be prevented. By paying attention to warning signs and talking about the “unthinkable,” you may be able to prevent a death.

## **Why do people take their own lives?**

Most people who attempt suicide are ambivalent about taking their own life, however circumstances make them feel that life is unbearable. Suicide seems like the only way to deal with their problems because they have an extreme sense of hopelessness, helplessness and depression.

Some of the factors that may lead a person to attempt suicide are:

- feelings of isolation
- having a serious physical illness
- experiencing a major loss (death of a loved one, unemployment or divorce)
- abuse of drugs or alcohol
- experiencing major changes in life
- prolonged depression with alterations in thinking patterns
- post-partum depression
- history of severe child abuse
- living in a violent relationship

## **What are the danger signs?**

Some people who kill themselves do not give any warning at all. Many, however, offer clues and communicate their plans to others. Individuals expressing suicidal intentions should always be taken seriously.

Some of the signs to look out for are:

- direct suicide threats such as “I want to die,” or indirect threats such as “You would be better off without me”
- personality changes or withdrawn behavior
- hoarding medication
- giving away prized possessions
- lack of interest in future plans
- isolation from friends and colleagues
- depression, rage, or anger
- sleeping too much or too little
- reckless, risky behavior

Threats that may signal imminent danger often come from people who are isolated, who have attempted suicide before (and then were discovered only by accident), are impulsive, and have access to lethal means (weapons, drugs).

## **What can you do to help prevent a suicide?**

Suicide is a taboo subject yet talking about it openly is helpful. A person contemplating suicide needs the support of people who listen and care. If you are concerned that someone you know may be suicidal, take action:

- find a place to talk where the person feels comfortable, they need to know that you respect their need for privacy
- encourage the individual to express their feelings freely – the single most important thing you can do is to listen attentively without judgment
- ask them whether they have considered suicide – bringing up the subject will **not** cause them to act upon it
- talk to them about your concern and fears – they need to know that someone cares ask whether there is anything you can do
- talk about the resources that can give them support – family, friends, clergy, counseling or psychiatric treatment
- let them know that you are there to support them, but also know your limits – you cannot do it alone

## **What can you do if you are feeling suicidal?**

It may seem like there is no light at the end of the tunnel, and asking others for help and discussing your feelings can seem scary. If you reach out, you will discover that there is help and that you are not alone. Many people have felt suicidal when facing difficult times and have survived, returning to normal lives.

If you have these feelings you should:

- talk to a trusted friend or family member about your feelings
- call a crisis telephone support line
- talk to your physician; he or she can arrange for counseling and/or prescribe medication
- get involved in a self-help group and talk to people who have “been there”
- understand that you are not in the best shape to make major decisions

## **Where can you go for more help?**

Mental Health Specialists

School Counselor

Minister or spiritual leader or trusted, caring adult

Physicians or other medical professionals

Family members

## **For more info**

**SAMHSA Treatment Referral Helpline, 1-877-SAMHSA7 (1-877-726-4727)**

**Mental Health.gov - <https://www.mentalhealth.gov/get-help/immediate-help>**

## **Helplines**

**1-800-SUICIDE (743-2433)**

**1-800-274 TALK (8255)**

**1-800-799-4TTY (4889) for hearing and speech impaired**