

Suicide Prevention

Suicide is an international problem and a major public health concern. Suicide claims approximately 1 million lives worldwide each year, resulting in one suicide every 40 seconds. There is an estimated 10 to 20 suicide attempts per each completed suicide, resulting in several million suicide attempts each year.

Risk factors remain essentially the same from country to country. Mental illness, substance abuse, previous suicide attempts, hopelessness, access to lethal means, recent loss of loved ones, unemployment and vulnerability to self-harm are just a few examples of risk factors.

Protective factors are also the same in all corners of the world. High self-esteem, social connectedness, problem-solving skills, supportive family and friends are all examples of factors that buffer against suicide and suicidal behaviors.

Warning Signs

- Increased **substance use** (alcohol or drug)
- No reason for living; no sense of **purpose** in life
- **Anxiety**, agitation, unable to sleep or sleeping all of the time
 - Feeling **trapped** - like there's no way out
 - **Withdrawal** from friends, family and society
 - Rage, uncontrolled **anger**, seeking revenge
- Acting **reckless** or engaging in risky activities, seemingly without thinking

Ways to start a conversation about suicide:

- I have been feeling concerned about you lately.
- Recently, I have noticed some differences in you and wondered how you are doing.
- I wanted to check in with you because you haven't seemed yourself lately.

Questions you can ask:

- Did something happen that made you start feeling this way?
- How can I best support you right now?
- Have you thought about getting help?



What you can say that helps:

- You are not alone in this. I'm here for you.
- I may not be able to understand exactly how you feel, but I care about you and want to help.

Ask the question directly!

- Are you thinking about killing yourself?
- Have you had thoughts of suicide?

Ways to Help

DO

- Be aware. Learn the warning signs.
- Get involved. Become available.
- Show interest and support.
- Ask if he/she is thinking about suicide.
- Be direct. Talk openly and freely about suicide.
- Be willing to listen. Allow for expression of feelings. Accept the feelings.
- Offer hope that alternatives are available.
- Reach out.

DON'T

- Dare him/her to do it.
- Give advice by making decisions for someone else to tell them to behave differently.
- Ask 'why'. This encourages defensiveness.
- Offer sympathy.
- Act shocked. This creates distance.
- Be sworn to secrecy. Seek support.
- Offer reassurance; it only proves you don't understand.
- Be judgmental. Don't debate whether suicide is right or wrong, or feelings are good or bad. Don't lecture on the value of life.

Crisis Resources:

In an emergency: 9-1-1

Johnson County Mental Health Center:

Immediate Help: 913-268-0156

To Access Services: 913-826-4200

National Hotline:

Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK

Other Helpful Resources:

www.afsp.org/about-afsp

www.jocogov.org/suicideprevention

www.facebook.com/JOCOMNH

Suicide is preventable, help is available.

