

## WHAT DO I SAY . . . to my child if I think he or she is at risk of suicide?

Suicide need not claim as many lives as it does each year. There is help available and we can all play a part to ensure that individuals with thoughts of suicide get the help they need.

### WHAT YOU CAN DO:

- **Be aware.** Learn the warning signs.
- **Take any indication of suicide seriously**, no matter how casually they may be conveyed.
- **Get involved.** Be available, show love & support.
- **Ask directly** if they are thinking about suicide.
- **Talk openly** about suicide and try not to act shocked or surprised.
- **Be willing to listen.** Rather than ask “why”, allow them to express how they are feeling, accept these feelings and try not to judge them for having these feelings. If you do, they may stop talking about this.
- **Listen for risk factors** (Do they have a plan? How long have they had these feelings? Do they have the means to carry out their plan?)
- **Try to understand** their feelings and reflect this understanding back to them. Don't get defensive. Your child is expressing feelings, not blaming you.
- **Help your children explore the things that they are proud of** or that make them happy. You can't solve their problems for them but you can but you can help them find the help they need.
- **Take action. GET HELP.** Remove any dangerous objects that could be used to inflict self-injury. Get professional help.

Anyone who is suicidal needs the help of a counsellor or mental health professional. This provides them with the opportunity to learn new life strategies to cope with their stresses and pain.

[www.suicidehelp.ca](http://www.suicidehelp.ca)



**PARENT**

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## ATTITUDES

It is very important that you understand your own attitudes about suicide and then set them aside. The individual considering suicide is the important one and we need to be able to listen to their feelings without judging them.

## WARNING SIGNS

- **Loss**—relationships, self-esteem, moving . . .
- **Change in behaviour**—eating, sleeping, moodiness
- **Withdrawal/isolation**
- **Grades dropping**
- **Threats of suicide** or self-injury—ANY statement revealing a desire to die or indicating that they feel others would be better off without them.
- **Increased use of alcohol and/or drugs**
- **Making final arrangements**—saying goodbye, giving away prized possessions
- **Depression**—hopelessness, worthlessness
- **Previous suicide attempt**
- **Lack of interest** in previously enjoyed activities

## WHAT TO SAY

"I've heard you mentioning suicide lately. I'm very concerned. Are you feeling so bad that you are thinking of killing yourself?"

"I'm concerned for you because you have seemed very down lately. Would you like to talk? I'm here for you."

"I can tell you're really hurting. You can tell me what you're going through. I love you and nothing you say will shock me or make me reject you."

"I would like to try to understand what it is you are feeling. If you won't talk to me about it, is there someone else you trust?"

## RESOURCES

### 24 Hour Help Lines:

Alberta Help Line	1-877-303-2642
Kid's Help Phone	1-800-668-6868
Native Youth Crisis Line	1-877-209-1266
Emergency	9-1-1

- School (counsellor, teacher, coach)
- Crisis Line
- Hospital
- Community Agency
- Church Leader
- Support Group
- Doctor
- Family
- RCMP
- **ANY TRUSTED PERSON!**

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