

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

There is help available for youth at risk. We can all play a part to support a friend to get them the help that 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 and show 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.
- **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.
- **Help your friend 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 be a support person and help them find the help they need.
- **Take action. GET HELP.** Help them talk to someone that they trust, other than you. You can't promise that you will keep it a secret.
- Remember—it's not your job to fix their life, but you can get them in contact with appropriate resources that can help them.
- Anyone who is suicidal needs the help of a counselor 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



FRIEND

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WARNING SIGNS

- **Loss**—relationships, self-esteem, moving . . .
- **Change in behaviour**—eating, sleeping, moodiness
- **Withdrawal/isolation**
- **Drawing/writing about death**
- **Risky behaviour** uncharacteristic of them
- **Grades dropping, trouble at work**
- **Threats of suicide** or self-injury
- **Increased use of alcohol and/or drugs**
- **Making final arrangements**—saying goodbye, giving away prized possessions
- **Depression**—expressing hopelessness, helplessness, worthlessness
- **Previous suicide attempt** - especially if they did not receive support/treatment after
- **Lack of interest** in previously enjoyed activities

WHAT TO SAY

“You’ve been talking about death a lot lately. Are things getting so bad that you’re thinking about killing yourself?”

“I can tell something is wrong and you’re in pain. I’m here for you.”

“I can’t promise to keep this a secret. You are my friend and I want to help you. We need to tell someone who can help us.”

“I think we need to talk to someone who knows what to do to help you. Can we go talk to someone together?”

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
- Parent
- Community Agency
- Church Leader
- RCMP
- **ANY TRUSTED PERSON!**

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