



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

There is help available for people at risk. We can all play a part to support a friend to get the help they NEED!

WHAT TO DO:

- **Be aware.** Learn the warning signs.
- Get involved; be available, **show support.**
- **Ask directly** if they are thinking about suicide. (eg. “**Are you having thoughts of suicide?**” or “**Are you thinking about killing yourself?**”) This tells your friend that it is okay to talk to you about it.
- **Talk openly** about suicide.
- **Be willing to listen.** Rather than ask “why”, allow them to express how they are feeling, accept these feelings and don't judge them for having these feelings.
- **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 be a support person and help them find the help they need.
- **TAKE ACTION. GET HELP.** Talk to someone they **TRUST.**

WHAT NOT TO DO:

- **DON'T judge** your friend, don't tell them they are wrong or that feeling this way is bad. This may make them decide to stop talking to you.
- **DON'T dare** your friend to do it. They may feel that you **REALLY** don't care about them.
- **DON'T give advice** by making decisions for them or by telling them to behave differently.
- **DON'T ask “WHY”.** This encourages defensiveness. Asking “**what happened to make you feel this way?**” is better.
- **DON'T act shocked.** This may put distance between you and your friend.
- **DON'T KEEP IT A SECRET!** Don't promise not to tell anyone. You need to **get help.**

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Email: support@suicidehelp.ca Website: www.suicidehelp.ca

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WARNING SIGNS

- **LOSS**- relationships, self-esteem, moving.
- **Change in behavior** – eating, sleeping habits, withdrawal, anxiety, moodiness
- **Suicide threats** – ANY statements revealing a desire to die. Eg. “Everyone would be better off without me.”
- **Increased use of alcohol and/or drugs.**
- **Making final arrangements** – saying goodbye, giving away prized possessions.
- **Depression** – expressing hopelessness, helplessness, worthlessness
- **Previous suicide attempts** – especially if they did not receive support

WHAT DO I SAY IF I SEE THE WARNING SIGNS?

“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 that you’re hurting. 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:

ALBERTA HELP LINE 1-877-303-2642

CRISIS LINE (403 CALLING AREA) 1-800-784-2433

CRISIS LINE (780 CALLING AREA) 1-800-232-7288

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