

# Suicide Prevention and Awareness

*Seek help as soon as possible by contacting a mental health professional or by calling the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK or dial 988 if you or someone you know exhibits any of the following suicide warning signs talked about below:*

**Have you ever heard this?** “I can’t keep doing this.” “What’s the point?” “They are better off without me.” “Everyone will get over it; people die all the time.” “I don’t have anything left in me to keep going.” “No one understands.” “No one wants me here.” “I have nothing to live for.” “Killing myself is my only way out of all of this.” “I’ll die eventually, why not just get it over with?” “I want \_\_\_ to hurt as much as I do.”

**What is Suicide?** Suicide is a continuum: It progresses from feelings (despair, hopelessness, etc), to thoughts (ideation), to behaviors (attempts). Suicide carries shame and stigma, and great misunderstanding within the faith community.

<b>Warning Signs to Look Out for:</b>	
Previous attempts. Threatening to hurt or kill oneself or talking about wanting to hurt or kill oneself	
Looking for ways to kill oneself by seeking access	Access could be firearms or available pills
Talking or writing about death, dying, or suicide. Possible use of social media as a means to express this.	
Feeling hopeless or trapped-like there is no way out	Strong rage, uncontrolled anger, or revenge seeking
Acting reckless or engaging in risky activities and acting without thinking of consequences	
Increase of alcohol or drug use	Withdrawing from friends, family, and society
Feeling anxious or agitated, being unable to sleep, or sleeping all the time	
Experiencing dramatic mood changes	Giving away personal belongings
Seeing no reason for living or having no sense of purpose in life and has no future plans	
Sudden elevation of positive mood	Focusing on repairing relationships/friendships

**These are some of the feelings and thoughts one may experience:**

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Can't stop the pain</li> <li>● Can't think clearly</li> <li>● Can't make decisions</li> <li>● Can't see any way out</li> <li>● Can't sleep, eat or work</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Can't get out of depression</li> <li>● Can't make the sadness go away</li> <li>● Can't see a future without pain</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Can't see themselves as worthwhile</li> <li>● Can't get someone's attention</li> <li>● Can't seem to get control</li> </ul> |
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# When it Seems Like There is No Hope: There is Help

When someone you know is thinking about suicide keep three things in mind: Listen, Ask, Act

## Listen:

- It is important for people to have the opportunity to explore difficult feelings. Being listened to in confidence and accepted without prejudice can alleviate general distress, despair and suicidal feelings. Often, being listened to is enough to help someone through a time of distress. Even just showing that you are there for them, and that you know they are going through a distressing time, can be a comfort.
  - The biggest key in suicide intervention is showing someone you care and that his or her life matters. That they are loved, valued, and cared for can give hope. Feeling valued and accepted by another gives the ability for them to connect with their own value and importance as a child of God.
- \* Make Eye Contact \* Summarize \* Ask Clarification Questions \* Reflect Feelings \***

## Ask:

- Ask the person directly if he or she (1) is having suicidal thoughts/ideas, (2) has a plan to do so, and (3) has access to lethal means:  
*“Are you thinking about killing yourself?”*  
*“Have you ever tried to hurt yourself before?”*  
*“Do you think you might try to hurt yourself today?”*
- “Have you thought of ways that you might hurt yourself?”*  
*“Do you have pills/weapons in the house?”*

## Act:

- If you think the person might harm him or herself, *do not leave the person alone*. Say, “I’m going to get you some help.”
- Where to get help: 24 Hour Crisis Numbers: 1-800-273-TALK | 2-1-1 | 988 |
- [www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org) or <http://www.save.org/>

## Things to Keep in Mind:

- Be direct. Talk openly and matter-of-factly about suicide.
- Be willing to listen. Allow expressions of feelings. Accept the feelings.
- Be non-judgmental. Don't debate whether suicide is right or wrong, or whether feelings are good or bad. Don't lecture on the value of life.
- Get involved and be available. Show interest and support. Also be aware of keeping healthy boundaries.
- Don't act shocked. This will put distance between you. Also, don't be sworn to secrecy. Seek support.
- Take action. Remove means, such as guns or stockpiled pills.
- Get help from people/agencies specializing in crisis intervention and suicide prevention.
- Remember that suicide is a short-term crisis, even if the individual is battling long-term mental health struggles. Suicide as an answer is rarely thought of with a clear or logical head space. Getting help for long-term mental health struggles and establishing healthy ways to cope will help the short-term crisis.
- If you can connect someone back in a healthy support network of relationships, their faith in God, and therefore where they find their purpose in living, the person can and usually will want to remain alive.