Helping Someone Who Is Suicidal

Take threats of suicide seriously. Listen to a suicidal person's thoughts and concerns with compassion. The fact that they are talking to you is an important sign that they trust you. Reasons for suicide can depend on where we are in life.

- The younger person is often depressed over lost love.
- The middle aged person is often depressed over financial problems.
- The elderly often commit suicide because of health problems.

SIGNS IN FAMILY OR FRIENDS WHO ARE SUICIDAL

- Depression which suddenly gets better may be a cause for concern. Getting over depression is usually a gradual process. A sudden change may mean that person has suddenly thought of their suicide as a "solution."
- A sudden loss of interest in family and friends, and social withdrawal, may indicate problems.
- Loss of personal hygiene habits and just not caring for self.
- There may be a decline in handling of school, work or other activities.
- Injuries which are self inflicted such as burning, cutting, etc.
- Expressions of helplessness, hopelessness, and a sense of the loss of ability to handle life.
- There may be risk taking behavior such as casual sex and drug use.

COMMON SUICIDE RISKS ARE:

- Death or terminal illness of relative or friend.
- Broken relationships.
- Loss of health.
- Financial losses.
- Chemical abuse, (drugs and alcohol).
- Previous suicide attempt.

If you do not feel adequate to listen or help, ask the person if you can help them get help or can share their concerns with someone else such as a professional counselor. Just talking with someone else is helpful and you can be that help by listening. Some helpful points are:

- Listen to the person's thoughts and concerns. Let them unburden their troubles on you.
- Let them know you will not let them be alone with their pain.
- Ask them if they are having thoughts of hurting themselves.
- Ask what you can do to help lessen their pain.
- Suggest that they seek professional help and that you will assist them in finding help. Let them know you will continue to be available to help them.

Remind them that **depression is temporary**. When a person has a suicidal depression they do not believe their problems can get better. They need to be reminded that suicide is never a solution. They also need to be reminded that their death can do life-long damage to their family and friends. **Help is available and you will help them find it.**

National Suicide Help Lines With 24 Hour Help Are:
1-800-SUICIDE
1-800-784-2433

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