

If you feel suicidal or know someone who is suicidal, get help.

WHAT TO DO:

- Be direct. Talk openly and matter-of-factly about suicide.
- Be willing to listen. Allow expressions of feelings. Accept the feelings.
- Get involved. Become available. Show interest and support.
- Offer hope that alternatives are available but do not offer glib reassurance.
- Take action. Remove means, such as guns or stockpiled pills.
- Get help from persons or agencies specializing in crisis intervention and suicide prevention.

WHAT NOT TO DO:

- Do not be judgmental. Do not debate whether suicide is right or wrong, or feelings are good or bad.
- Do not lecture on the value of life.
- Do not dare him or her to do it.
- Do not act shocked. This will put distance between you.
- Do not be sworn to secrecy. Seek support.
- Do not leave the person alone if you believe the suicide risk is immediate.
- Do not counsel the person yourself.



SUICIDE PREVENTION COUNCIL
of St. Joseph County and Surrounding Areas

Suicide Prevention Council Mission Statement

Our mission is community collaboration to address our community's needs through using awareness of education and training on suicide prevention, intervention and postvention.

For more information visit our website at
www.sjcsuicideprevention.com
or call (574) 220-6381

National HOTLINE

1-800-273-TALK

Local Help: Emergency Services

(877) 234-0061 toll free

(574) 234-0061 local

(operated by Madison Center)

Suicide: How to Help a Friend in Need



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Suicide is Forever

Suicide is a permanent response to problems that have other solutions. It's hard to see alternatives when you are in crisis, but they do exist.

- Most people who consider suicide do not want to die—they want their pain to go away. Pain can be helped in other ways.
- Life's painful times do not last forever, even if it feels like they will.
- Having suicidal thoughts is nothing to be ashamed of. It's something to get help for.

Warning Signs

A person may be seriously contemplating suicide if he or she exhibits some of the following behavior:

- Talks about suicide
- Has trouble eating or sleeping
- Experiences drastic changes in behavior
- Withdraws from friends and/or social activities
- Loses interest in hobbies, work, school, etc.
- Prepares for death by making out a will and final arrangements
- Gives away prized possessions
- Has attempted suicide before
- Takes unnecessary risks
- Has had recent severe losses
- Is preoccupied with death and dying
- Loses interest in their personal appearance
- Increases their use of alcohol or drugs

About Suicide

- The Surgeon General (1999) declared suicide prevention to be a national issue; education is the key to prevention.
- The National Mental Health Association reports that the majority of individuals who attempt suicide have given clear warnings and it is critical that these signs of suicidal ideation are recognized and that one knows how to respond appropriately.
- People are afraid to talk about suicide; however to understand and prevent suicide is a means of promoting human well-being.
- Nationally, more persons lose their lives to suicide than to homicide each year.
- On average, 1 person kills themselves every 17 minutes, 1 elderly person kills themselves every 1 hour 40 minutes and an average of 1 young person dies by suicide every 2 hours 12 minutes.
- Suicide is the 3rd leading cause of death among 15-19 year olds; statistics also suggest that for every death by suicide there are as many as 300 attempts.
- In St. Joseph County there are on average 2 – 3 suicides every month and for each of these at least six survivors (friends and relatives of the victim) are intimately affected.

Who is at risk?

- History of depression
- Previous suicide attempt
- Family history of psychiatric disorders, especially depression or suicidal behavior
- Disruption in the family
- Chronic physical or psychiatric illness
- Alcohol use and alcoholism
- History of physical or sexual abuse
- The break-up of a relationship
- Significant loss, such as divorce or death
- Pressure to succeed in school, sports, etc.
- Low self-esteem
- Problems with peers, including bullying behavior

One Common Myth about Suicide

MYTH:

Talking about suicide or asking someone if they feel suicidal will encourage suicide attempts.

REALITY:

Talking about suicide provides the opportunity for communication. When a person shares his or her fears, they're more likely to diminish. The first step is to ask whether or not the person is intending to harm him/herself. Listen non-judgmentally and, if the situation warrants, seek professional counseling. Do not take on the role of therapist yourself.



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