

Warning Signs of Suicide

A suicidal person urgently needs to see a doctor or mental health professional

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Ideation (thinking about suicide) | <input type="checkbox"/> Hopelessness (there is nothing to live for, no hope or optimism) | <input type="checkbox"/> Statements about hopelessness, helplessness, or worthlessness |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Substance use or abuse (increased or change in substance) | <input type="checkbox"/> Withdrawal (from family, friends, work, school, activities, hobbies) | <input type="checkbox"/> Preoccupation with death |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Purposelessness (no sense of purpose or belonging) | <input type="checkbox"/> Anxiety (restlessness, irritability) | <input type="checkbox"/> Loss of interest in things one cares about |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Anger | <input type="checkbox"/> Recklessness (high risk-taking behavior) | <input type="checkbox"/> Visiting or calling people one cares about. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Trapped (feeling like there is no way out) | <input type="checkbox"/> Mood disturbance (dramatic change in mood) | <input type="checkbox"/> Making arrangements; setting one's affairs in order |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Talking about suicide | <input type="checkbox"/> Giving things away, such as prized possessions |

WARNING: *watch out for the depressed person who exhibits a sudden, intense lift in spirits! This may indicate he/she has already made the decision to commit suicide, and no longer feels distress over the idea.*

Tips on Dealing with a Suicidal Person

Find out:

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| • <i>Reasons for living</i> | • <i>Fear of messing up the suicide and being worse off</i> | • <i>Willingness to accept psychiatric or psychological treatment</i> |
| • <i>Coping beliefs</i> | • <i>Risk factors</i> | • <i>Substance abuse issues</i> |
| • <i>Responsibility to family</i> | • <i>Support system</i> | • <i>Strengths and weaknesses</i> |
| • <i>Moral/religious objections</i> | | |

Remember:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When someone tells you they are thinking about suicide, just tell them directly "Don't Do It", even before you ask questions about plan or motive. • Discouraging a parent from suicide for the sake of his/her young children can be a double-edged sword. It can be the best way to dissuade someone, but in rare cases, it can get the parent to consider taking the children with him/her. • Gather information from all the sources (family, friends, neighbors). • If the person is actively suicidal, don't leave him/her alone. Once you've begun an intervention, don't stop until help arrives. • Acknowledge emotions. • Express your willingness to help. • Provide a support network. • Give them different options to combat hopelessness. • Ask to dispose of any weapons. • Don't give false assurances. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't rely on a "No Suicide Contract" as a quick solution to suicidality. Such contracts have no real predictive value, and are of limited effectiveness in preventing suicide • Know Baker Act criteria. • Document everything you say and do with the person. |
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- Stay as calm as you can...

