

WORLD SUICIDE PREVENTION DAY

TAKING TIME TO REACH OUT

Changing the Narrative on Suicide starts with each of us. Reaching out to a family member, friend, colleague, or even a stranger can change the course of another's life. By showing that you care, you can help give someone hope. All of us can play a role, no matter how small. We may never know what action makes a difference, but we all have the ability to reach in and ask somebody how they are doing.

You do not need to tell them what to do or have solutions. Simply making the time and space to listen to someone about their experiences of distress or suicidal thoughts can help. Small talk can save lives and create a sense of connection and hope in somebody who may be struggling.

Look out for those who are not coping

Warning signs of suicide include: Hopelessness, rage, uncontrolled anger, or seeking revenge, acting recklessly or engaging in risky activities without thinking, feeling trapped, like there's no way out, increased alcohol or drug use, withdrawing from friends, family, and society, anxiety or agitation, inability to sleep or sleeping all the time, dramatic mood changes.



You don't need to have all the answers

People are often reluctant to intervene for many reasons, including a fear of not knowing what to say. It is important to remember there is no specific formula. Individuals in distress are often not looking for specific advice. Empathy, compassion, genuine concern, knowledge of resources, and a desire to help are key to preventing a tragedy.

Those who have survived a suicide attempt can teach us a lot about how the words and actions of others can be impactful. Many who have come through severe suicidal thinking often say they were not looking for specific advice but that compassion and empathy from others helped turn things around for them and pointed them toward recovery.



Don't be afraid to ask someone if they are suicidal

Another factor that prevents individuals from intervening is the worry of making the situation worse. This hesitance is understandable, as suicide is a difficult issue to address, and there is a myth that talking about it may instigate vulnerable individuals to contemplate the idea or trigger the act. Evidence suggests this is not the case. Offering support and a listening ear is more likely to reduce distress than exacerbate it.

The listening ear of someone with compassion, empathy, and a lack of judgment can help restore hope. We can check in with them, ask them how they are doing, and encourage them to tell their story. This small gesture goes a long way.



Start the conversation



Start a conversation if you notice something is different with someone. By doing so, we can encourage those with suicidal thoughts to reach out.



Take time to notice what is going on with you, your family, your friends, and your colleagues. By stepping closer and reaching in, we can be aware of those around us who need help.



Take time to find out what help is available for both you and others. By stepping closer and reaching in, we can support those in need by sitting with them in their pain. Every action can connect someone to life and the help they need.

Changing the narrative on suicide means each of us must **start the conversation** and show empathy, compassion, and support to those who need it most.

