



Helping Hands: How to Spot Suicide Warning Signs



How to Spot Suicide Warning Signs

It's important to understand that there is no single cause of suicide, but suicidal ideation often emerges from a combination of feeling considerable psychological pain and hopelessness. Most people at risk show some signs that they are thinking about suicide, which may appear through their speech, behavior, and emotions. Being able to spot these signs among family members, friends, and co-workers and take action could make a world of difference if the individual gets the help they need. Learn about these signs to watch out for below, and visit suicideispreventable.org for more information.

SIGNS TO WATCH FOR

Speech

Be aware if someone is talking about:

- Feeling hopeless or desperate
- Not having reasons to live
- Being a burden to others
- Feeling like things would be easier if they weren't here
- Giving up
- Being trapped in a situation
- Feeling unbearable pain

Behavior

- Reckless behavior
- Increased alcohol or drug use
- Putting affairs in order
- Changes in sleep
- Giving away possessions
- Social withdrawal

Emotions

- Depression or persistently low mood
- Anxiety
- Hopelessness
- Irritability or agitation
- Anger or aggression
- Excessive shame or guilt
- Extreme mood swings

CRITICAL SIGNS TO WATCH FOR



Talking about wanting to die or suicide



Seeking methods for self-harm, such as searching online or obtaining a gun



Talking about feeling hopeless or having no reason to live



If you notice these signs, call or text **988** or chat **988lifeline.org** to reach the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline in the U.S. You can find emergency and suicide hotlines for other regions at the end of this guide.

How to Take Action

If you suspect that someone may be suicidal, take the initiative and get involved. Use this six-step action plan if you think someone is contemplating suicide.



Step 1: **Ask**

The first step is to talk directly and openly with the person. Asking directly about suicide does not increase suicidal thoughts or tendencies. Rather, it communicates that you're open to talking about it.

- Questions to ask: "Do you ever feel so bad that you'd consider suicide?", "How are you hurting?", "How can I help?"

Step 2: **Actively listen**

Take their answers seriously and practice active listening.

- To do this, **acknowledge the speaker** and let them know you are listening (e.g., nod your head, make eye contact, etc.). Then, **verbally respond** (e.g., ask questions, make clarifying statements, etc.) but make sure to not interrupt. Finally, **summarize what you hear** to show you have understood them.
- It is critical to be non-judgmental of their feelings, the act itself, or their situation. Acknowledge their suffering as legitimate.

Step 3: **Keep them safe**

Ask if they have a plan (e.g., "Have you thought about when you would do it?", "Have you thought about what method you would use?"). Once it's clear that suicidal ideation is present, it is important to assess the amount of danger the person is in right now.

- If they have a plan and intention of acting on the plan, it is paramount to put **time** and **distance** between the person and the means. Many attempts occur during a short-term crisis, and substituting an alternative method for the one already thought of is uncommon.

Step 4: **Be there to support them**

Be available and show interest. Being there for someone increases their sense of belonging and connectedness, which can combat feelings of hopelessness. Also, **make it clear that they are not a burden**. Rather, express that you want to be there because you care.

Step 5: **Help them connect**

Help them reach out to friends or family and get access to mental health professionals. If they are in immediate danger with a plan and a means, call your local crisis resources or escort them to an **emergency room**.

Step 6: **Follow up**

It is crucial to fulfill your commitment to supporting them, so follow up by checking in and reminding them that you are there to help.



Modern Health and Crisis Response

Modern Health helps guide individuals to the right level of care at the right time. Each employee has access to a full spectrum of support to meet their unique needs. If you are worried about a team member and notice they might benefit from additional resources, or if they come to you looking for support, here are a few suggestions that may help.

This is provided for general guidance only and does not replace professional or medical advice. Each individual should be making their own decisions about how to proceed in the described scenarios.

How and when to refer to Modern Health

	SITUATION	EXAMPLE	RESPONSE
LEVEL 4	Team member is on the verge of causing harm to self or others	"I don't think I can stop myself from hurting myself"	Call 988 (National Suicide Prevention Hotline). If outside of the U.S., access the International Emergency & Suicide Hotlines on page 2
LEVEL 3	Team member is expressing thoughts of self-harm or suicide	"I feel like everyone would be better off without me"	Direct team member to Modern Health and proactively provide local crisis resources (i.e., Mental Health Hotline 988)
LEVEL 2	Team member comes to you with lower level distress	"I'm feeling really anxious about work"	Have a conversation and refer them to Modern Health for 1-on-1 support
LEVEL 1	You notice a change in team member's behavior	Team member has stopped speaking up in meetings	Proactively have a conversation with your team member and refer them to Modern Health for 1-on-1 support



International Emergency and Suicide Hotlines

In the U.S., the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline is **988**, and the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is **1-800-273-8255**. If you live outside the U.S., you may find your region's emergency and suicide hotlines below.

Country or Region	Local Emergency Hotline	Suicide Hotline
Australia	000	131114
Canada	911	1 (833) 456-4566
China	110	800-810-1117
Finland	112	010 195 202
France	112	0145394000
Germany	112	08001810771
India	112	8888817666
Ireland	112	+4408457909090
Israel	100	1201
Japan	110	810352869090
Romania	112	0800 801200
Singapore	999	1 800 2214444
South Korea	112	(02) 7158600
Spain	112	914590050
Sweden	112	46317112400
Switzerland	112	143
United Kingdom	112	08457909090
United States	988	(800) 273-8255



Additional Modern Health Resources



One-On-One Care

Modern Health can match you with a care expert who can help you process intense emotions and break patterns of spiraling thoughts and feelings. Seeking one-on-one support earlier in your mental health journey can also reduce your risk of being vulnerable to suicide.

[Get matched with a provider today.](#)



Self-Guided Digital Resources

You can access self-guided digital resources on-demand 24/7, including digital programs, guided meditations, and courses:

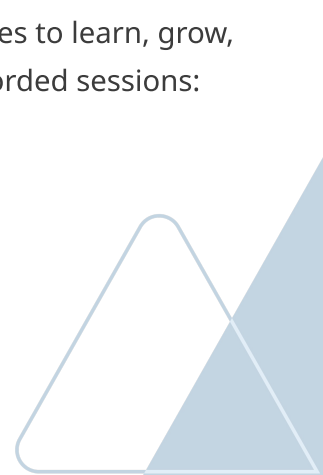
- [Skills for Navigating Intense Emotions course](#)
- [Preparing for Tough Talks program](#)
- [Empathic Listening Role Play meditation](#)
- [Moving From Worry to Problem Solving program](#)
- [Roadblocks when Asking for Help program](#)
- [Coping With Grief and Loss meditation](#)



Circles

Circles are pre-recorded and live provider-led community spaces to learn, grow, and connect across important topics. Check out these pre-recorded sessions:

- [Self-Compassion: A Beginner's Guide](#)
- [Coping with Stress and Anxiety During Uncertainty](#)
- [Difficult Thoughts: A Beginner's Guide](#)
- [Emotional Resilience: A Beginner's Guide](#)
- [Communication: A Beginner's Guide](#)



Start for free today!

Scan this QR code. Or go to my.modernhealth.com
Questions? help@modernhealth.com

