

Suicide – What you need to Know

Suicide should always be taken seriously, as it is one of the leading causes of death among young people. If you hear someone talking about suicide, it may be a cry for help and it is important to take it seriously.

Why would someone want to die by suicide?

Suicide is complex and often misunderstood. In Canada, most people who die from suicide have a mental disorder. Suicide or suicidal thoughts is not a normal response to stress or sadness, nor is it part of being a 'normal teenager'. Some people think that suicidal behaviours are just a cry for attention but regardless of the complex reasons behind the behaviour it is important to get them professional help. Suicide is a very serious issue.

I think my friend is suicidal

If you think someone is suicidal, it is important that you listen and take him/her seriously. Your friend needs to know that you care and that it matters to you whether he or she lives or dies. Accept that your friend's feelings are very real, even if they don't make sense to you. You should see a counselor for information and advice on how to approach your friend. You can also try to get your friend to visit the counselor with you there for support.

Suicide warning signs

Here are some warning signs that someone may be considering suicide:

- Talk about what it will be like for others after they're gone
- Suicidal thoughts
- Preoccupation with death
- Withdrawal from family and friends
- Intense hopelessness or sadness
- Giving away valued possessions

If you notice these signs in someone you care about, ask if he or she is thinking about committing suicide. Asking about suicide directly will not put the idea into his/her head. Be polite and respectful but don't beat around the bush. Be direct, keep an open mind, and try not to be judgmental. Remember that no matter how you feel about the situation, your friend's feelings are real and valid. Asking your friend about suicide shows that you care enough to have a potentially uncomfortable conversation. Your friend will likely be relieved that you asked, knowing that he or she is not alone.

Know the signs! Call 911 or take your friend to the emergency room at the hospital if he or she needs immediate help. Do not wait! Take all threats of suicide very seriously!

Adapted from: <https://www.jack.org/resources/everything-you-need-know-about-depression>