

Warning Signs of Suicide/FACTS

Warning signs of suicide can be organized around the word “FACTS”:

FEEELINGS

- Hopelessness: feeling like things are bad and won't get any better
- Fear of losing control, going crazy, harming himself/herself or others
- Helplessness: a belief that there's nothing that can be done to make life better
- Worthlessness: feeling like an awful person and that people would be better off if he/she were dead
- Hating himself/herself, feeling guilty or ashamed
- Being extremely sad and lonely
- Feeling anxious, worried, or angry all the time

ACTIONS

- Drug or alcohol abuse
- Talking or writing about death or destruction
- Aggression: getting into fights or having arguments with other people
- Recklessness: doing risky or dangerous things

CHANGES

- Personality: behaving like a different person, becoming withdrawn, tired all the time, not caring about anything, or becoming more talkative or outgoing
- Behavior: can't concentrate on school or regular tasks
- Sleeping pattern: sleeping all the time or not being able to sleep at all, or waking up in the middle of the night or early in the morning and not being able to get back to sleep
- Eating habits: loss of appetite and/or overeating and gaining weight
- Losing interest in friends, hobbies, and appearance or in activities or sports previously enjoyed
- Sudden improvement after a period of being down or withdrawn

THREATS

- Statements like “How long does it take to bleed to death?”
- Threats like “I won't be around much longer” or “Don't tell anyone else . . . you won't be my friend if you tell!”
- Plans like giving away favorite things, studying about ways to die, obtaining a weapon or a stash of pills: the risk is very high if a person has a plan and the way to do it.
- Suicide attempts like overdosing, wrist cutting

SITUATIONS

- Getting into trouble at school, at home, or with the law
- Recent loss through death, divorce, or separation; the breakup of a relationship; losing an opportunity or a dream; losing self-esteem
- Changes in life that feel overwhelming
- Being exposed to suicide or the death of a peer under any circumstances

Resources:

- Helpline: 1-800-273-8255
- SDsuicideprevention.org
- afsp.org
- ReachOut.com
- TheTrevorProject.org
- School Counselor

The Qualities of Helpful People

Helpful people notice the “SIGNS” of suicidal behavior.

Show You Care:

- ⇒ Listen without judging or giving advice
- ⇒ Take all talk of suicide seriously.
- ⇒ Stay calm, stay with your friend.

Ask About Suicide:

(Know your limitations. If this is out of your comfort zone talk to a trusted adult who can have this conversation with your friend.)

- ⇒ Ask about suicide very directly: “Are you thinking about suicide?”
- ⇒ “Are you wishing you were dead?”
- ⇒ “Are you planning how you will kill yourself”

Get Help:

- ⇒ Take action as soon as possible.
- ⇒ Have your friend identify a trusted adult and offer to go with them to talk to the adult.
- ⇒ Call a crisis line. 1-800-273-8255
- ⇒ Offer help/hope in anyway appropriate.
- ⇒ Know your limits.
- ⇒ Tell a trusted adult that your friend is showing suicidal behavior, even if your friend doesn’t want you to!