

# Suicide



Don't fool around with this; if someone says they are suicidal, believe them. If someone says they are going to kill themselves, stay with them, call 9-1-1 for help and be there until help arrives. If you think someone might be thinking of suicide, ask; it won't give them an idea they hadn't thought of. If you know someone who did commit suicide, you will need to talk with a good counselor about the loss. If you feel suicidal, you've probably bumped against something you need to talk over with a counselor you can trust.

## The Danger Signals

1. Lack of interest, hopelessness, apathy.
2. Indecisiveness, putting things off.
3. Insomnia or trouble sleeping too much.
4. Change in appetite, eating too much or too little.
5. Touchiness, criticism or seeming neglect.
6. Sad mood, brooding and crying.
7. Guilt, saying, "I wish I were dead" or "You'd be better off without me."
8. Social withdrawal.
9. Changes in appearance, no longer caring about clothes or hair.
10. Giving away important possessions.
11. Use of drugs, even alcohol.
12. History of previous suicide attempt.
13. Sense of failure.

"Don't be afraid to tell someone when you're stressed out, even if you don't know why," says Dr. Ray Wm. Smith.

extreme displeasure over the smallest disappointment,

There are people trained to help those considering suicide.

14. No plans, lack of concern for the future.
15. Preoccupation with death, morbid topics.
16. Risky behaviors.
17. Voices, saying hurt yourself.
18. Suddenly better, brightening mood for a previously depressed person.
19. Putting affairs in order, saying good-bye to important people.
20. Actually thinking about a plan to take your own life.

## Ways to Be Helpful

- If someone is threatening suicide, believe them. Learn the warning signals.
- Be aware, available and supportive.
- Ask openly and directly if she is thinking about suicide.
- Allow him to express feelings without judgment or criticism. Listen with love.
- Don't dare her to do it.
- Don't give advice ("Cheer up!") or debate decisions.
- Don't act shocked.
- Don't get sworn to secrecy.
- Don't offer glib reassurances that everything will be just fine.
- Take action. Remove the means of suicide.
- Call 9-1-1.
- Get help from persons and organizations trained to prevent suicide or to intervene in a crisis.
- Be willing to listen to negative emotions, like loneliness, hopelessness and helplessness.
- Show understanding and compassion for the feelings you hear.
- Refer the suicidal person to a place for help; if she had a ruptured appendix, you would not do the surgery, so do not try to *fix* this big problem, either. Recruit good help from a therapist.