

National Suicide Prevention Month

How to recognize the signs of suicide

Many people experiencing depression and suicidal ideation show one or more warning signs through what they say and how they act. If you suspect someone close to you may be struggling, pay close attention whenever a sign is new, has increased, or follows a change or painful loss. Recognizing the signs and knowing what to do next can save a life.

Know the signs

What they say

- Sharing they want to die or end their life
- Saying they feel hopeless or have no reason to live
- Expressing they feel trapped or in unbearable pain
- Believing they are a burden to others

What they do

- Researching ways to end their life
- Withdrawing and isolating from others
- Giving away possessions or saying goodbye
- Increase drinking or drug use
- Sleeping too much or too little

Note: These signs are not exhaustive, and someone at risk may show none of them. When in doubt, ask.

What to do

1 Ask them directly

Questions like: “Are you thinking about suicide?” Being direct is caring, not harmful.

Dispelling the myth: Asking someone directly whether they are thinking about suicide does not plant the idea or increase risk. It opens the door to support and lets them know you care.

2 Listen and stay

Hear them without judgment. Take it seriously, and do not leave them alone if the risk feels immediate.

3 Connect to help

Reach the 988 Lifeline together, or help them connect with a mental health crisis professional.

988

Suicide & Crisis Lifeline

Call or text 988, or chat at 988lifeline.org. Free, confidential support available 24/7 for you or someone you care about.

If someone is in immediate danger, call 911 or go to the emergency room.