

Suicide

If you are looking for information about suicide, this may be helpful to you. The risk factors and warning signs of suicide are listed here. How to help someone who may be suicidal and resources for help are also provided.

What factors increase the risk of suicide?

- Psychiatric diagnosis such as depression, bipolar, anxiety, or schizophrenia
- Past suicide attempts or self harm
- Feeling hopeless or alone
- Access to a gun or lethal means to harm oneself
- Acting in an impulsive or angry way
- Drug or alcohol abuse
- Poor health
- Contact with others who have recently died by suicide
- History of trauma or abuse
- Social factors:
 - Young adults and elderly are at higher risk than others
 - Males are at higher risk for committing suicide, while females attempt suicide more often
 - A family history of suicide or violence
 - Single, divorced, and widowed are at higher risk than married
 - A recent loss (death or divorce) or anniversary of a loss
 - Major hard life events (loss of job, moving to a new place)

What are the warning signs of suicide?

- Thinking about suicide
- Threatening suicide, talking about it, or having a wish to die
- Having a plan to commit suicide
- Behaviors that suggest thoughts of suicide (talking or writing about death, giving away personal possessions, getting the means to kill oneself)
- Depression and low mood
- Increased alcohol or drug use
- Hopelessness, desperation or feeling there is no way out
- Impulsive dangerous behaviors
- Changes in sleeping and eating habits
- Decline in work or school function
- Social withdrawal
- Loss of interest in activities someone used to enjoy
- Sudden lift in spirits after being depressed
- Lack of concern about personal welfare
- Feeling like a burden to others
- Searching online for ways to commit suicide

What should you do if you think someone may be suicidal or you feel suicidal?

- Call for help (see next page) or talk with a professional if you are concerned.
- Take any warning sign of suicide seriously.
- Talk openly with the person you are concerned about. Ask the person if

he or she is thinking about suicide or killing themselves. Know that asking a person if she is thinking about suicide will not give them the idea to kill themselves.

- Stay close to the person until help arrives or the risk has passed.
- Remove guns and medicines that might be used in an attempt.

Who should you call for help?

If you are concerned about someone or yourself, you should act on your concern. It is better to err on the side of being too concerned than to do nothing. In many cases, suicide can be prevented. You may call the psychiatrist or therapist (or their on-call coverage) working with the person or yourself.

If it is an emergency, call 911.

National Suicide Prevention line
1-800-273-TALK (8255)
1-800-799-4TTY (889)
Suicidepreventionlifeline.org

You may call your local or county behavioral health department. It is often part of your local or county human service department. You may find the phone number in the phone book, on the internet, or by calling 411.

For Dane County Residents

Journey Mental Health Center of Dane County has a 24-hour Suicide Crisis Line for emergencies at **(608) 280-2600**.

There are several resources at University Hospital and Clinics. Call the Emergency Room at **(608) 262-2398**.

Crisis Text Line

<https://www.crisistextline.org/>

This is a free, 24/7, confidential text message service for people in crisis. Text HOME to 741741.

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person's health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright ©2/2019. University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing. HF#4449.