

Suicide/Domestic Violence Prevention/Intervention

Reason: Everyone is created in the image of God, therefore every individual is valuable.

Jesus died for everyone, therefore every individual is invaluable.

Goals: To give them hope. To give them a next step (see a counselor, talk to someone, let you check up on them, leave, etc.)

1. Very few actually want to die. If they are talking to you, they don't.
2. If they do, nothing you can say will make a difference.
3. But if you are talking to them, God has a reason (what you have experienced, who you are, how you care)

Warning: This is not easy. Your feelings and emotions will most likely run rampant inside you.

Some of the things you need to say and do will be counterintuitive.

Three exceptions to the rule of confidentiality (if applicable, must be shared with a person up front)

1. **Suicidal thinking.** If you have a reasonable suspicion that someone is considering harming or killing themselves, then let the person know that you'll take whatever action necessary to keep that individual safe.
2. **Incidences of child/elderly abuse.** If a person shares with you an event where there is a reasonable suspicion of child or elderly abuse, then inform the person that you will need to discuss this with one of the ministry leaders.
3. **Homicidal thinking.** If you have a reasonable suspicion that someone is considering harming or killing someone else, then let the person know that you will take whatever action necessary to keep that from happening.

Principles of engagement: *As soon as they start to go this route, try to get info about where they are!

1. Believe it or not, you really don't have to be afraid. Remember, the most frequent command in the Bible is "Don't be afraid". Why? Because God is with you. Specifically, the Holy Spirit, who is in you and really takes over in situations like this.
 - a. Matthew 10:19-20, But when they hand you over, do not worry about how to respond or what to say. In that hour you will be given what to say. For it will not be you speaking, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.
 - b. Luke 12:11-12 When you are brought before the synagogues, rulers, and authorities, do not worry about how to defend yourselves or what to say. For at that time the Holy Spirit will teach you what you should say."
 - c. If you are talking to this person, God has set a "divine appointment" for you and there is a reason. (point of connection, similar situation/feelings, etc.).
2. Listen, listen, listen
 - a. Try not to say anything for a while, or very little
 - b. It's ok to ask questions of clarification, or about them
 - c. You show you care, and you gain the right to speak to them later.

Suicide Prevention/Intervention

The Big Ask: You've said some things that concern me; are you thinking about harming yourself or taking your life?

1. Their possible responses:
 - a. NO! I'm just frustrated, angry, etc.
 - b. Sometimes I feel this way, but I would never do it.
 - c. Yes. (Important point: if they called you, they probably really don't want to kill themselves. Engage with them.)
 1. Try to give them a reason not to do it, such as their children, grandchildren, other family members, etc. Try to encourage them to understand that God cares about them, and try to help them see that God can make a way out.
 2. If they have been coerced into talking to you somehow, they actually may be serious about it.

* I don't believe if a person commits suicide after you talked to them it had anything to do with you. You were God's last ditch effort to keep them alive and they didn't listen to HIM!

** I do believe that it is possible for us to talk a person out of suicide that has sat down with us intending to do it, or seriously is thinking about it. But as long as you are doing your best from your heart, you CANNOT blow it!

3. Your possible responses: See decision chart

4. Helpful hints:

- Flash prayers (pray for them, God to lead, etc.)
- The CCC principle (cool, calm and collected). It doesn't matter so much what's happening on the inside as long as you control it on the outside)
- The principle of Low and Slow. Talk slowly and with low volume and pitch. It communicates both control and caring.

Suicide Decision Matrix

I took something/ etc.

I've already hurt myself



Where are you?



Call 911

I can't handle it/I don't want to live anymore,



I care about you. Are you planning to hurt yourself?



Yes



No



Why? What's the plan?



Has plan and means



Hospital if voluntary/911 if not



No plan or means



Let's talk. Are you willing to talk to someone?



Yes

Give them resources or
promise to call them back
with resources



No

Ask if you can check on them

2. Helpful things to ask:
 - a. Why are you feeling this way?
 - b. How can I support you right now?
 - c. Have you thought about getting help?
3. Helpful things to say:
 1. Whether or not you feel it, there is always hope. It will be if bring God into this (if at all possible).
 2. It may be hard to believe now, but the way you're feeling will change.
 3. I care about you and I'm sure there are others that do also (say this only if you know it to be true from the conversation. Use examples such as parents, children, relatives, spouses, etc.).

The following is adapted from Metasnoia.org

When talking to a suicidal person, Do: (and remember this...**The right words are often unimportant.**)

- Be yourself. Let the person know you care, that he/she is not alone. If you are concerned, your voice and manner will show it.
- Listen. Let the suicidal person unload despair, vent anger. No matter how negative the conversation seems, the fact that it exists is a positive sign.
- Be sympathetic, non-judgmental, patient, calm, accepting. Your friend or family member is doing the right thing by talking about his/her feelings.
- Offer hope. Reassure the person that help is available and that suicidal feelings are temporary. Let the person know that his life is important to you (and to God).
- If the person says things like, "I'm so depressed, I can't go on," ask the question: "Are you having thoughts of suicide?" You are not putting ideas in their head, you are showing that you are concerned, that you take them seriously, and that it's OK for them to share their pain with you.

When talking to a suicidal person, Don't:

- Argue with the suicidal person. Don't say things like: "You have so much to live for," "Your suicide will hurt your family," or "Look on the bright side."
- Act shocked, lecture on the value of life, or say that suicide is wrong.
- Promise confidentiality. Refuse to be sworn to secrecy. A life is at stake and you may need to speak to a mental health professional in order to keep the suicidal person safe. If you promise to keep your discussions secret, you may have to break your word.
- Offer ways to fix their problems, or give advice, or make them feel like they have to justify their suicidal feelings. It is not about how bad the problem is, but how badly it's hurting your friend or loved one.
- Blame yourself. You can't "fix" someone's depression. Your loved one's happiness, or lack thereof, is not your responsibility.

Remember: God has called you into it and He will see you through it. 1 Cor. 10:13, Esther 4:4

Questions:

Domestic Violence follows the exact same line of thought. Just help them make a wise choice as their next step.

Domestic Abuse Decision Tree

