

Information for those who are considering suicide

People who are experiencing suicidal thoughts, need to know that they're not alone. By some estimates, as many as one in six people will become seriously suicidal at some point in their lives.

Reach out.

Share your thoughts and feelings with someone you can trust or with a professional. Don't keep your struggles to yourself, let others help bear the burden.

Suicidal thinking is usually associated with problems that can be treated.

Clinical depression, anxiety disorders, chemical dependency, and other disorders produce profound emotional distress. They also interfere with effective problem-solving. But you need to know that studies show that the vast majority of people who receive appropriate treatment improve or recover completely.

If you are unable to think of solutions other than suicide, it is not that solutions don't exist, only that you are currently unable to see them.

Pastors and counselors (and sometimes friends) can help you to see solutions that otherwise are not apparent to you.

Suicidal crises are almost always temporary.

Although it might seem as if your unhappiness will never end, it is important to realize that crises are usually time-limited. Solutions are found, feelings change, unexpected positive events occur. Suicide is sometimes referred to as "a permanent solution to a temporary problem." Don't let suicide rob you of better times that will come your way when you allow more time to pass.

Problems are seldom as great as they appear at first glance.

Job loss, financial problems, loss of important people in our lives – all such stressful events can seem catastrophic at the time they are happening. Then, month or years later, they usually look smaller and more manageable. Sometimes, imagining ourselves "five years down the road" can help us to see that a problem that currently seems catastrophic will pass and that we will survive.

Reasons for living can help sustain a person in pain.

A famous psychologist once conducted a study of Nazi concentration camp survivors, and found that those who survived almost always reported strong beliefs about what was important in life. You, too, might be able to strengthen your connection with life if you consider what has sustained you through hard times in the past. Family ties, faith in God, and dreams for the future are just a few of the many aspects of life that provide meaning and gratification, but which we can lose sight of due to emotional distress.

If you know of someone who is suicidal. Do not leave the person alone.

CLARIFY: “Do you really want to die, or do you simply want to change the way you live your life?”

CONTRADICT via:

Desired outcome will not be achieved.

Suicide will create more problems than it solves.

Suicide creates an adverse and undesired “ripple effect” affecting others.

DELAY: Not necessarily solving all of their problems but to get them to the next level of care. Remove any firearms, drugs, alcohol, or sharp objects that could be used in an attempt.

REFER: Always assist in accessing higher level of care. For life threatening emergencies or immediate response, call 9-1-1.

Information for those who have lost loved ones through suicide

Connect with friends and family

Talk! Talk! Talk! Speak of your pain and loss for as long and as often as you need to speak of it. Get with people you are comfortable talking to.

Express your grief.

Don’t suppress, avoid or postpone grief’s expression. Tears are cathartic and cleansing and give yourself time to grieve.

Faith questions.

Connect with your pastor for perspectives of faith and suicide. A person is not defined by how they died but by how they lived. Many people who die by suicide as they last act cry out to God for His grace and understanding. When you don’t know what to think, fall back on what you do know: God is gracious, merciful and full of love and compassion.

Reflect.

Reflect on the good times/pleasant memories. Identify legacy issues that you would like to pass on to future generations (i.e. good traits to follow, bad traits to forgive).

Strengthen coping resources.

Stay connected with your supportive community and do the things that strengthen you and give you hope (e.g. Scripture, prayer, support group, journal, exercise, regular routines, recreation, etc.).

Give yourself time to grieve.

Don’t feel pressure to move on quickly. Grief shouldn’t be hurried. Managing the suicide loss takes time. In fact, it may take a lifetime to process. Understand that each individual and family grieves uniquely.