

Talking About Suicide

In honor of Suicide Prevention Month, it's important to know how to [#StartTheConversation](#). Talking about suicide with a friend or family member who is in emotional distress can be challenging, but it's a significant step in offering support.

Here are some best practices for initiating the conversation:

✓ Choose an Appropriate Setting

Find a private and comfortable place where your friend or family member feels safe talking. Ensure there are minimal distractions so you can give them your full attention.

✓ Express Concern and Care

Begin by expressing your concern and care for them. Use "I" statements to avoid sounding accusatory, such as "I've noticed you've been feeling really down lately, and I'm worried about you."

✓ Ask Directly About Suicide

Be direct but compassionate. Asking about suicide does not plant the idea in someone's head. Use clear language, such as, "Are you thinking about suicide? Or "With all the pain you're feeling, have you thought about ending your life?"

✓ Listen Non-judgmentally

Let them talk and express their feelings without interrupting or judging. It's important to show empathy and understanding.

✓ Validate their Feelings

Use phrases like, "I'm sorry you've been feeling this way" or "I'm here for you" to help show you care and make the person feel understood.

✓ Encourage Professional Help

Suggest seeking help from a mental health professional and offer to help them find resources or go with them to an appointment. You can say, "Would you be willing to talk to a therapist or counselor? I can help you find one." If they need more urgent support, you might say, "I think it's important we get you some help right now. Would you like me to call 988 or go with you to the nearest psychiatric ER?"

✓ Stay With Them

If they are in immediate danger, do not leave them alone. Remove any means they could use to harm themselves or contact 911 if necessary.

🧡 Remember, suicide is preventable! Although it can feel uncomfortable, asking someone directly about suicide gives the person an opportunity to share their thoughts and feelings, which can be a big relief.

