

Mental Health

Suicide Risk - What to Do

Are you in crisis or thinking about suicide?

Even if it may not seem like it, there is hope. Suicide is not the only choice.

If you are feeling suicidal:

- Call 911 and ask them to take you to the hospital emergency department, or
- Contact someone you trust and ask them to go with you or take yourself to the hospital emergency department or crisis centre.

You have made the right choice to look for help.

Is someone you know in crisis or thinking about suicide?

It is important to know that you can help.

Someone thinking about suicide is feeling so much pain they don't know what else to do. But they are also unsure and still want to live.

What you should do:

- Stay calm & listen to what the person is saying
- Directly ask the person "Are you thinking about suicide?" or "Are you thinking about killing yourself?"
- Directly ask the person "How do you plan to do it?" and "How soon?"
- Remind the person that they are not alone - you are with them
- Contact and involve someone they trust - family, friend, doctor, counsellor
- Call the suicide prevention hotline in your area.

If you think their risk of suicide is immediate:

- Get the person to agree not to act on the suicide plan
- Make arrangements to get the person to the hospital emergency department or crisis centre - do not hesitate to call 911
- If you are with the person, do not leave them alone
- If you are in phone contact with the person, get someone else to either call 911 or someone the person trusts to take them to a hospital emergency department

Look out for the following suicide risk factors and warning signs, does the person exhibit one or more of the following:

- Mental health conditions such as depression or addictions;
- Physical health conditions with ongoing pain;
- Stressful life events such as relationship problems/loss, work problems/loss, conflict with the law, decline of benefits from any source;
- Unemployment, financial worries, debt;
- Limited supports like family, friends, social groups;
- Tendency to act impulsively and/or alcohol use;
- Peers or family who have died by suicide;
- Access to firearms, medications and other dangerous items;
- Behaviours like withdrawal, recklessness, putting affairs in order, giving away possessions;
- Physical issues like untidy appearance, disturbed sleep, complaints of pain;
- Talking about escape, suicide or death, having no future, being a burden to others;
- Talking about feeling desperate, sad, angry, ashamed, worthlessness, lonely, hopeless.