

# If a Loved One Talks of Suicide

You may have a friend or loved one who reaches a low point in life and wants to die by suicide.

Is there anything you can do to help?

Yes, there might be. It's not an easy path to follow, but intervention by family and friends sometimes turns a person back toward positive thinking.

## How to Help

Here are ways you can help your friend:

- Accept him without judgment, and listen to what they say
- Take the threat of suicide seriously
- Don't ask too many questions or analyze the situation
- Validate her experience
- Stress that the situation is nothing to be ashamed of
- Do not offer advice
- Be positive
- Point out places where she can get help
- Offer to enlist support from others
- Buy time

## What to Say

Let your loved one talk, but when you speak, say:

- I am your friend. I love you and care about what happens to you
- How can I help you?
- I really want you to get help, right now
- I will go with you, if you like
- I will check in later to see how you are doing



If this is a serious threat, don't take no for an answer when it comes to getting outside help. Call a pastor, doctor, suicide line or take the person to an ER. Or, do all of the above.

## What Not to Say

Whatever you do, do not say:

- You will get over it
- It is not as bad as you think
- Here is what you should do
- How could you do something like this!
- Do you know how much this will hurt your family?

Remember to take a deep breath if you are nervous. You need to take care of yourself, too, if you are to be able help your friend.

When you offer help, do not be surprised if he says there is nothing you can do. Do not settle for that answer. Say, no, that is not a good answer.

Most of all, do not give up trying. Be prepared to stay with him or in touch with him until he is out of immediate danger, or for as long as it takes.

If you or your loved one are in a crisis and need help immediately, call **(800) 273-TALK (8255)** or **(800) SUICIDE (784-2433)** any time, any day.