

How to Respond to Suicidal Behavior

IN AN EMERGENCY, CONTACT:

- ★ 911
- ★ Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1 (800)273-TALK (8255)
- ★ Psychiatric hospital walk-in clinic
- ★ Hospital emergency room
- ★ Urgent care center/clinic

TO HELP A YOUNG FRIEND OR RELATIVE, TALK TO THEM AND ENCOURAGE THEM TO OPEN UP.

- ★ Offer unconditional emotional support, understanding, patience, and encouragement.
- ★ Talk to him or her, but hold back from asking too many questions or lecturing.
- ★ Listen carefully and acknowledge the pain or sadness they are suffering.
- ★ Never dismiss feelings, but point out realities and offer hope.
- ★ Be persistent, even if you are shut out initially. Gently be respectful of their comfort levels, as depression can be difficult for young people to talk about, but emphasize your concern and willingness to listen.
- ★ Never ignore comments about suicide, and report them to your loved one's therapist or doctor.
- ★ Invite your loved one out for walks, outings and other activities. Keep trying even if he or she declines, but don't push him or her to take on too much too soon.
- ★ Remind them how much you care for them.

Depression is treatable. If you suspect your family member or friend is struggling with depression, help them help themselves, by encouraging them to see a trained professional.