

Toolbox Talk: Suicide Warning Signs



What leads to suicide?

No one takes their life for a single reason. Suicide most often occurs when stressors and health issues converge to create an experience of hopelessness and despair. Something to look out for when concerned that a person may be suicidal is a change in behavior or the presence of entirely new behaviors. This is of sharpest concern if the new or changed behavior is related to a painful event, loss, or change. Most people who take their lives exhibit one or more warning signs, either through what they say or what they do.

Know the Signs

Talk

If a person talks about:

- Killing themselves
- Feeling hopeless
- Having no reason to live
- Being a burden to others
- Feeling trapped
- Being in unbearable pain

+ Behavior

Behaviors that may signal risk, especially if related to a painful event, loss or change:

- Increased use of alcohol or drugs
- Looking for a way to end their lives, such as searching online for methods
- Withdrawing from activities
- Isolating from family and friends
- Sleeping too much or too little
- Saying goodbye to people
- Giving away prized possessions
- Aggression
- Fatigue

+ Mood

People who are thinking about suicide may display one or more of the following moods:

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Loss of interest
- Irritability
- Humiliation, shame
- Agitation, anger
- Relief or sudden improvement

Have an honest conversation

If you are worried about someone, assume you are the only one who will reach out.

- Talk to them in private, listen to their story, and let them know you care.
- Ask directly about suicide, calmly and without judgement.
- Show understanding and take their concerns seriously.
- Let them know their life matters to you.

If you or someone you know needs support now, use the following resources:

988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline

Call or text 988 or chat 988lifeline.org

Veterans: Press 1

Crisis Text Line

Text TALK to 741741

Text with a trained counselor for free, 24/7