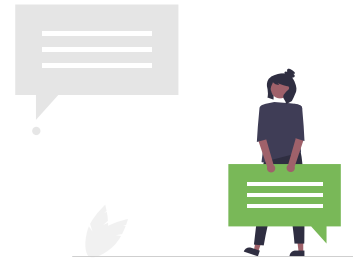


How to Start a Conversation About Suicide with a Friend

Starting a conversation about suicide with a friend who is in emotional distress can be challenging, but it's an important step in offering support. Below are some best practices for initiating this sensitive discussion.



- **Choose an Appropriate Setting** – Find a private and comfortable place where your friend 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?”

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.

- **Listen Non-judgementally** – 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.