

FACTS ABOUT

Helping a Suicidal Person

Information for Family and Friends



A suicidal person should always be taken seriously. To them, suicide is not the problem, it's a solution that the person thinks is an option to solve their problems. Never assume the person is just trying to get attention.

Is the Danger Immediate?

If a person is in immediate danger, do not try to handle the situation by yourself! **Dial 9-1-1** and get help. While you are waiting for help, here is what you can do:

- **Do not act shocked.** The suicidal person is distressed and additional stress may elevate their mental state.
- **Stay calm.** Listen to the person and let them talk openly and for as long as they want to. Learn as much as you can about why they are feeling suicidal.
- **Talk openly** and matter-of-factly with them. Do not be judgmental.
- **Comfort the person** and use common sense in your words. Be gentle, caring, and show the person you are truly concerned about them.
- **Do not leave him or her alone.**

A suicidal person will need ongoing support. Once the person is no longer critically suicidal, help them make an appointment with a physician and therapist. Seeking professional help to treat physical or mental illness is crucial to their sensitive emotional state and to ensure the future safety of that person.

Assist the person in making a list of people and organizations that they can contact if they have a suicide crisis situation - include physicians, therapists, friends, and family who can help in an emergency.

Help arrives... now what?

- If the suicidal person is admitted to a hospital, be sure the medical staff has important details so that appropriate medical care can be given.
- Talk with the doctors and nurses about how they will keep the person safe from self-harm.
- Ask questions of the medical staff regarding medications and what their recommended treatments are and how they will assess them.
- Do not abandon the person to the hospital staff. Visit as frequently as possible. If you are unable to visit, get help from others who can.
- Monitor the person and how the treatments seem to be affecting them. Report any issues or concerns to the appropriate medical staff.

Help for Yourself

Providing support for a suicidal person can be taxing on you, both physically and emotionally. **Set up a support network for yourself. Include important family members, friends, suicide support groups, and medical staff (if needed).**

WESTERN COLORADO



SUICIDE PREVENTION
FOUNDATION

Sources of Help

Suicide Help Lines

1-800-273-TALK (1-800-273-8255)

1-800-SUICIDE (1-800-784-2433)

www.suicide.org

www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org

www.save.org

Western Colorado Suicide Prevention Foundation

<http://www.suicidepreventionfoundation.org>

(970) 683-6626