

## Know the Signs of Depression

Not all depressed people are suicidal; however, depression is a major risk factor for suicide.

- Trouble concentrating
- Slowed thinking or indecisiveness
- Pessimism
- Rigid thinking
- Perception of being a burden to family & friends
- Unusual interest in how others are feeling
- Hopelessness
- Helplessness
- Excessive sadness or crying
- Loneliness or feelings of isolation
- Persistent low mood
- Anxiety
- Pulling away from friends, family, social groups
- Loss of interest in formerly pleasurable activities
- Trouble sleeping
- Changes in weight or appetite
- Changes in attention to appearance
- Decrease in sexual drive
- Fatigue or loss of energy

Remember to watch for extreme changes in behavior; it doesn't have to be a "negative" change for something to be going on.

Suicide rarely results from just one factor or event but rather from a complex interaction of many factors.

## Available Resources

### Missouri Crisis Hotline

888-761-4357

### The Trevor Lifeline

866-488-7386

### Veterans Suicide Prevention Lifeline

800-273-8255 ext.1

### National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

800-273-8255

[suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://suicidepreventionlifeline.org)

### Crisis Text Line

text HELLO to 741741



### Want to learn more about how to help a friend?

Visit the Ask Listen Refer website at  
[asklistenrefer.org](http://asklistenrefer.org)  
and click on your campus!

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## How to Help Someone Who May Be Suicidal

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# Experiencing a suicidal crisis can be hard, but there are ways that you can help.

Having the knowledge and tools for helping could save the life of someone you care about. The following guidelines are presented to help provide a sense of direction and facilitate the helping process.

## Warning Signs of Suicide

**Warning signs indicate immediate concern about suicide and a need to take action.**

- Starting or increasing use of alcohol or drugs
- Aggressive, impulsive, reckless or disruptive behavior
- Current talk of suicide, expressing strong wish to die, or talking about wanting "pain" to end
- Making a suicide plan
- Giving away belongings, tying up loose ends, saying goodbye to friends and family
- Purchasing a firearm
- Obtaining other means of killing oneself

Asking about suicidal thoughts is highly unlikely to give the person the idea. If someone is showing warning signs of being suicidal, they have, in all likelihood, already thought about it.

## How to Help

**While the following steps will help, you have more opportunities to be better prepared. Start here.**

**Get trained.** Reading this is a start, but you can complete the Ask.Listen.Refer training online to be better prepared to help someone who is suicidal or who may be contemplating suicide.

**Take the training at [www.asklistenrefer.org](http://www.asklistenrefer.org)**

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## ask

**Ask directly.** Talking about the person's thoughts openly and frankly can help prevent a person from acting on them. This may include asking if the person has a particular plan or method in mind. Give hope. Sometimes people can't think of any other solutions to what is causing the distress. You can acknowledge that the person currently feels hopeless but also convey that things can get better and there are other options. You may even be able to offer some alternative actions, but you do not need to counsel the person.

## listen

**Do not attempt to argue anyone out of suicide.** Rather, listen, be nonjudgmental, and provide support. Let the person know you care, that they are not alone, that suicidal feelings are temporary, that depression can be treated, and that problems can be solved. Avoid the temptation to say things such as, "You have so much to live for," or "Your suicide will hurt your family or friends." Be genuine. When professional help is needed, a person is more likely to follow such a recommendation if you have genuinely listened to them.

## refer

**Encourage professional help.** Be actively involved in encouraging the person to see a physician or mental health professional immediately. Individuals contemplating suicide often believe they cannot be helped, so you may have to do more such as offering to go with the person to their appointment. Be aware of resources. Let the person at risk know about the free counseling services on campus. Do not promise secrecy. There is no confidentiality in life-threatening situations.

## What to do in case of an emergency

**Dial 911 if immediate assistance is needed,** particularly if you feel the person has already taken action (e.g., swallowed pills) or may do so without quick intervention.

**Find your local resources for help by visiting [asklistenrefer.org](http://asklistenrefer.org),** click on your campus, and click on 'Urgent Need?' or navigate to the 'Resources' section in the drop-down menu.

You or the person about whom you are concerned may **call the Missouri Crisis Hotline at 888-761-4357, or the National Suicide Prevention Life-line at 800-273-8255, or send a message to the Crisis Text Line: HELLO to 741741.**

**Do not leave the person alone if they are in crisis or immediate danger.**