

How to Help Someone Suicidal

It isn't easy to care for a loved one who is feeling suicidal. You might be overwhelmed by your own feelings about the prospect of losing them, or afraid of saying or doing the wrong thing. This is the best way to help:

1. **Listen** carefully without any judgment. Give them your complete attention, acknowledge what they say, validate their feelings and empathize with their current situation.
2. **Show that you care** through your words, body language and actions. Let them know that you care about them, what they are going through, and how they are feeling. Offer compassion, empathy, and concern. Start a conversation by asking the following questions:
 - I noticed you've been down lately. Would you like to talk about what's going on/how you're feeling?
 - I care about your wellbeing and want you to know I'm here to listen. Is there anything you'd like to talk to me about?
 - You don't have to go through this alone. Would you tell me what you're struggling with at the moment?
 - How can I help you?
 - Have you been thinking about ending your life?
3. **Do not belittle** what they say and how they feel because it is their reality. Be respectful of the individual and do not make jokes or take what they say lightly.
4. **Acknowledge their pain** by reminding them that their feelings of hurt are valid, their life matters and that you are here for them. Reassure them that their life CAN get better!
5. **Be calm** to help them carry on. Don't be alarmed by what they say or do. You need to be the rock that can steady them through their distress. If you need help, reach out to one of their family members or friends or take them to the nearest hospital.
6. **Do not leave them alone** until they have calmed down, and can assure you that they will not harm themselves. Ideally, wait till a family member, friend or colleague comes to be with them. Make sure to follow-up after you leave.
7. **Do not offer advice**, even if you think you know what's best. You may not fully understand what they are going through, and you are not professionally equipped to provide solutions.
8. **Do not promise confidentiality**, even if they ask you to keep it a secret. Tell them gently, with care and concern, letting them know that you will only talk about this with a family member, friend or mental health professional.

9. **Refer them to a mental health professional** to help them feel supported. You could also make an appointment with a mental health professional or provide information on where they can seek help. Follow-up on them to see how they are doing.

[Here](#) is a list of hospitals, clinical psychologists, therapists offering tele counselling and counselors offering free services. Remember, any thought or plan of suicide must be taken seriously!

10. **Share resources**, you can't always be there for someone who's distressed. If you know someone who is in immediate risk of attempting suicide then reach out to the following suicide helplines:

Vandrevala Foundation: +91 9999666555

AASRA: +91 9820466726

The Fortis HealthCare: +91 8376804102

SNEHA Foundation: 044-24640050

Jeevan Aastha: 1800-233-3330

Mpower: 1800-120-820050

1Life: 78930 78930

iCall: 022-25521111 (Mon to Sat from 8am - 10pm)

11. **Care for yourself.** Don't forget to replenish your own emotional reserves by resting, talking to a therapist, speaking to a friend, meditating, doing yoga, or disengaging from any potential stressors for some time.
12. **Become a Gatekeeper.** Gatekeeper training is a recommended WHO suicide prevention strategy to help those who are emotionally distressed or potentially suicidal. Trained Gatekeepers learn to recognize signs of suicide, provide emotional support, persuade to get help, and refer to mental health support services.