

YOUR CHILD HAS TALKED ABOUT ENDING THEIR LIFE: WHAT'S NEXT?

TALKING TO YOUR CHILD ABOUT SUICIDE MAY BE THE TOUGHEST AND MOST UNCOMFORTABLE CONVERSATION YOU EVER HAVE, BUT IT MAY ALSO BE THE MOST IMPORTANT.



HERE ARE FOUR TIPS TO USE WHEN TALKING TO YOUR CHILD:

1. Discuss changes you have noticed and why you are concerned.
2. Ask your child directly, "Have you thought about killing yourself?"
3. Do not try to solve your child's issues. Instead, show care, concern, and support.
4. Let them know that you will be there for them. Give your child an opportunity to come to you when they are ready to talk.

THINGS YOU CAN DO AT HOME

- Spend quality time together as a family
- Discuss ways to manage stress, anger, and disappointment
- Lock up hazardous items like firearms and medications
- Trade in social media and screens for outdoor or social activities
- Improve sleep habits

WHAT DO I NEED TO WATCH FOR?

- Increased use of alcohol or drugs
- Withdrawing from activities
- Looking for a way to kill themselves, such as searching online for materials or means
- Isolating themselves from family or friends
- Sleeping too little or too much
- Displaying one or more of the following moods: depression, anxiety, loss of interest, irritability, humiliation, agitation, rage
- A sudden or unexplained calm happiness after a long period of depression
- Saying goodbyes or tying up loose ends, such as giving away prized belongings

WHAT SHOULD I BE LISTENING FOR?

- Talk of suicide: "I just want to go to sleep and never wake up," "If ____ happens, I'll kill myself."
- Talk of hopelessness: "What is the point? Nothing is going to get better."
- Talk of feeling like a burden to others: "They would be better off without me."

WHERE CAN I TURN FOR HELP?

Your Pediatrician or Family Doctor
Mental Health Therapists
School Counselor
Psychologists
Psychiatrists
Crisis and Support Lines



HOW CAN I START THE CONVERSATION?

How are you? Be prepared for 'fine' or 'good, thanks' and follow up with: How are you really?

I've had a terrible week, how was yours? Sometimes it's good to break the ice with the fact that life isn't always great, and to show that you understand. Sharing some of the things you are struggling with can help start the conversation. Be careful not to make it all about you though.

You don't seem like yourself. Letting your friend or loved one know you have noticed something different about them shows them, you care. It's important to let them know you're concerned about them, not upset with them for behaving differently.

Is everything okay at home/work/school? Making the question specific can get the conversation started, but remember that it might not be just one thing. It might be a combination of many things, or maybe nothing in particular – just a general feeling.

NATIONAL
SUICIDE
PREVENTION
LIFELINE
1-800-273-TALK (8255)
suicidepreventionlifeline.org