ACT® now to stop a suicide
What to look for – and what to do – if you are concerned about someone

WHAT TO LOOK FOR — Check All That Apply

Part I: Suicide Risk Questionnaire

Have you heard someone say:

- Life isn’t worth living
- Nobody understands me — nobody feels the way I do
- My family would be better off without me
- There’s nothing I can do to make it better
- Next time I’ll take enough pills to do the job right
- I’d be better off dead
- Take my (prized collection, valuables) — I don’t need this stuff anymore
- I feel like there is no way out
- I won’t be around to deal with that
- You’ll be sorry when I’m gone
- I won’t be in your way much longer
- I feel like there is no way out
- I just can’t deal with everything — life’s too hard

Have you observed:

- Getting affairs in order (paying off debts, changing a will)
- Giving away articles of either personal or monetary value
- Signs of planning a suicide such as obtaining a weapon or writing a suicide note

Part II: Depression Risk Questionnaire

Have you noticed the following signs of depression:

- Depressed mood
- Feelings of worthlessness, self-reproach, or guilt
- Change in sleeping patterns (too much/little, disturbances)
- Thoughts of death, suicide, or wishes to be dead
- Change in weight or appetite
- Extreme anxiety, agitation, irritability or risky behavior
- Speaking and/or moving with unusual speed or slowness
- Racing thoughts, excessive energy, reduced need for sleep
- Loss of interest or pleasure in usual activities
- Excessive drug and/or alcohol use or abuse
- Withdrawal from family and friends
- Neglect of physical health
- Fatigue or loss of energy
- Diminished ability to think or concentrate, slowed thinking or indecisiveness
- Feelings of hopelessness or desperation

If depression seems possible, have you also noticed:

- Extreme anxiety, agitation, irritability or risky behavior
- Racing thoughts, excessive energy, reduced need for sleep
- Excessive drug and/or alcohol use or abuse
- Neglect of physical health
- Feelings of hopelessness or desperation

Questionnaire Interpretation - If you checked circles under:

Part I only: Your friend may be at risk for suicide and should seek professional help immediately.

Part II only: Your friend may be suffering from depression and should seek further evaluation with a mental health professional or his or her primary care physician.

Parts I and II: The suicide risk is even higher: strongly encourage your friend to seek professional help immediately.

Portions adapted from material provided by the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, (888) 333-AFSP, www.afsp.org.
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WHAT TO DO if you suspect someone you care about is considering suicide

ACT®: Acknowledge, Care and find

1. Acknowledge
   - Do take it seriously.
     70% of all people who commit suicide give some warning of their intentions to a friend or family member.
   - Do be willing to listen.
     Even if professional help is needed, your friend or loved one will be more willing to seek help if you have listened to him or her.

2. Care
   - Do voice your concern.
     Take the initiative to ask what is troubling your friend, co-worker, or loved one, and attempt to overcome any reluctance on their part to talk about it.
   - Do let the person know you care and understand.
     Reassure your friend or loved one that he or she is not alone. Explain that, although powerful, suicidal feelings are temporary, depression can be treated, and problems can be solved.
   - Do ask if the person has a specific plan.
     Ask if the person has a specific plan for committing suicide and how far he or she has gone in carrying it out. *(Note: asking about suicide does not cause a person to think about – or commit – suicide. This is a myth.)*

3. Treatment
   - Do get professional help immediately.
     Bring your friend to a local hospital emergency room or crisis center (if your friend is already in treatment, contact his or her clinician).
   - Call 1-800-273-TALK.
     The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, 1-800-273-TALK (8255), is a free service available 24/7 to provide assistance during a suicidal crisis or to provide mental health information and referrals.
   - If the person seems unwilling to accept treatment...
     Call the police or 911 if your friend is in immediate danger.

If for any reason you are unsure, uncomfortable, or unable to take action, find a health professional with whom to share your concerns or contact your local police.

What NOT to do...

- Don’t try to cheer the person up, or tell them to snap out of it.
- Don’t assume the situation will take care of itself.
- Don’t act shocked or surprised at what the person says.
- Don’t challenge or dare.
- Don’t argue or debate moral issues.
- Don’t be sworn to secrecy.
- Don’t risk your personal safety. If the person acts in a threatening way, just leave, and then call the police.

Did you know that...

- Sometimes those contemplating suicide talk as if they are saying goodbye or going away forever.
- Although most depressed people are not suicidal, most suicidal people are depressed.
- One study observed, nearly 50% of suicide victims had a positive blood alcohol level.
- 70% of people who commit suicide tell someone about it in advance, and most are not in treatment.
- Between 20 and 40 percent of people who kill themselves have previously attempted suicide.
- Those who have made serious attempts are at much higher risk for actually taking their lives.
- Serious depression can be manifested in obvious sadness, but often is expressed instead as a loss of pleasure or withdrawal from activities that were once enjoyable.

Visit www.StopASuicide.org for more information and resources on how to ACT to help your friend, co-worker or loved one.