



Helping a Friend in a Suicidal Crisis

The teen years are challenging as young people determine their own values and meaning in their lives. Often teens do not feel that they are understood, especially by adults. Both adult and societal expectations cause stress, anxiety and hopelessness in teens which can lead to suicidal thoughts.

Here are some ways to support a friend who might be thinking about suicide:

- **Know the clues to suicidal thoughts**
Signs of depression: Feelings of hopelessness and helplessness
Suicidal threats/words of warning (I wish I was dead)
Look for signals of loneliness/withdrawal and isolation from others
- **Trust your judgment of the potential situation.** If you think someone is in danger of hurting themselves act on your concerns
- **Share your concerns with an appropriate adult.** Tell a teacher, counselor, your parent, a Church leader. It is okay to break a confidence to help a friend in danger
- **Stay with a friend** who shows signs of suicidal thoughts or actions. It is important to be with the person until help arrives or the crisis passes.
- **Be a good listener.** Let the person talk about their fears/concerns. Pay attention. Stay calm and be understanding. Take their concerns seriously.
- **Talk about their suicidal thoughts.** Ask them if they have a plan and access to the things they need to execute their plan. This helps you assess the seriousness of the situation and determine the best course of action in getting them help
- **Encourage the help of a professional.** Offer to go with the person in obtaining professional help from a School Counselor, Church leader, Psychologist, etc.
- **Know local resources in advance.** Look up agencies and resources especially for teens in your school and community before a crisis occurs. This will assist you in offering good options to the person in need.
- **Be supportive.** Let the person know that you care about them, that they are not alone. Assure them that you will help them get appropriate help and will continue to be their friend.