

WHAT DO I SAY?

Suicide Awareness for Employees

Talking to someone about suicide can feel awkward and uncomfortable. But, if you have concerns, breaking through your own discomfort could save a life. Showing your concern and directly asking about suicidal thoughts can be vital first steps in helping someone get the support they need.

Be sensitive to the need for privacy. Approach and talk in a private setting.

Be yourself. Use honest and non-judgmental language to start a conversation. Tell the person what you've noticed. Use words that you feel comfortable with and that make sense given the situation and your relationship.

Be direct; ask if they're having suicidal thoughts. Give them a chance to talk. You should not act as a counselor or give advice, but let them know you are listening. Remember that it's not your job to "fix" this.

Show your concern and support. Acknowledge the despair they're feeling. Don't try to minimize their pain. Let the person know you care and that they are valued. Be kind, even if you feel angry about what they're considering.

Be aware that you may have to break confidentiality. Try to avoid promising to keep what they tell you to yourself, but do promise if it's the key to being allowed to help. You may need to break that promise to keep the person safe.

Help connect with professional help, even if they resists. A person who has reached a point where suicide is an option often does not believe they can be helped. Your EAP is a resource that is available 24/7.

Starting a conversation

- > *I feel like you haven't been yourself lately. I am concerned about you. Can we talk?*
- > *I want to respect your privacy, but I'm worried about you.*
- > *I know you've been having a tough time recently. Can you share what has been going on?*
- > *I really care about you and I can tell something is wrong. Can you tell me how I can help?*

Phrases you could use

- > *How long have you felt like this?*
- > *Have you been feeling hopeless?*
- > *How are you coping with what has been going on in your life?*
- > *You are not alone with this. I'm here for you.*
- > *I may not know exactly how you feel, but you matter to me and I want to help.*
- > *Can you think of anything I could do to help you?*
- > *I know it doesn't seem like it now, but you won't always feel like this. Things will change.*
- > *Have you thought about getting help?*
- > *I think you need help; I want to call someone to help us.*

Key questions to ask:

- > Are you thinking about hurting yourself?
- > Are you having thoughts about suicide?

Phrases that may not be helpful

- > You don't really want to do that.
- > It can't be that bad.
- > You have so much to live for.
- > You can't do that to your family.

What to do

If you become aware that someone is prepared to act on their suicidal thoughts, you should take immediate action. Your goal is to keep the individual safe and make a connection to others who can help. Use the SOS reminder:

S	Stay with them	Do not leave them alone, even for a brief time.
O	Obtain help	<p>Think of this as a medical emergency. You can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Call 911 > Call the National Suicide Prevention Hotline: 1.800.273.TALK (8255) > Call your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) and connect with a crisis counselor > At work, alert a manager, Security, or other appropriate person. > If it is a friend or relative, options might include calling their doctor or taking them to an Emergency Room (if the person can be transported safely).
S	Safety first	As much as you want to keep the individual safe, never put yourself or others in danger. If it's possible to do so safely, try to remove any item that could be used for self-harm. Use a calm voice and manner to keep the situation as controlled as possible.

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