



What to Do and What Not to Do

- Be aware. Learn the warning signs.
- Get involved. Become available. Show interest and support.
- Be direct. Talk openly and freely about suicide.
- Be willing to listen. Allow expressions of feelings. Allow feelings. Don't tell him or her to feel better.
- Be non-judgmental. Don't debate whether suicide is right or wrong, or if feelings are good or bad. Don't lecture on the value of life.
- Don't dare him or her to do it.
- Don't give advice by making decisions for someone else or tell him or her to behave differently.
- Don't ask "why". This encourages defensiveness.
- Offer empathy, not sympathy.
- Don't act shocked. This will put distance between you.
- Don't be sworn to secrecy. Don't promise not to tell anyone.
- Offer hope that alternatives are available, but do not offer glib reassurance. It only proves you don't understand.
- Take action. Remove means. Get help from persons or agencies specializing in crisis intervention and suicide prevention.