

FINDING HOPE

A TOOLKIT FOR SUICIDE PREVENTION



KNOW THE FACTS

Did you know that suicide is the 10th leading cause of death in the United States and the 2nd leading cause of death for those ages 10-34? We can help tackle this number, but it takes everyone to be aware of the warning signs, understand the myths related to suicide, and know how to get help.



Myth: “Suicide cannot be prevented. If the person is determined to do it, then nothing will stop them.”

Suicide can be prevented. When a person feels their life is spiraling out of control, they may start believing that death is the only way out. Mostly the person wants to end their pain, whether it is emotional or physical pain. During this time, talking with the person and seeking professional help can make a difference.

Myth: “People who talk about suicide won’t really do it.” Or “The person is just looking for attention.”

Those who talk about suicide or express thoughts about wanting to die are at risk for suicide and need your attention. It is estimated that nearly 90% of people who die by suicide give some indication or warning. Take all talk of suicide seriously even if it is made in a casual or joking manner. The person is inviting you to help.

Myth: “Asking a person about suicide will put the idea in their head or give them the idea.”

Because of stigma and shame, it can be hard for people to tell others they are thinking about suicide. Talking about suicide openly is one of the most helpful things you can do. When someone you know is struggling, asking them if they are thinking about suicide gives the person an opportunity to open up and share their troubles. By talking about it you can help them find solutions and save a life.

For more information about suicide prevention and awareness visit
Stop Suicide Northeast Indiana at stopsuicidenow.org

IS MY LOVED ONE SUICIDAL?

It is normal to have ups and downs and to feel anxious or sad at times, especially during hard times. Sometimes a person's sadness or anxiety can become overwhelming and start to interfere with everyday life. Being aware of warning signs for suicide can help you know when to reach out for help. **Warning signs for suicide can be organized with the acronym:**

FACTS

FEELINGS such as hopelessness, worthlessness, despair, emptiness, and feeling like a burden on people, or feeling anxious or trapped.

ACCTIONS such as seeking access to a gun or pills, reckless behaviors, increasing drug or alcohol use, fighting or getting in trouble, arranging one's funeral or getting their affairs in order, etc.



CHANGES in attitude, moods or behaviors. People may become withdrawn, quit teams or withdraw from groups, stop paying attention to personal appearance, sleep all the time or not at all, or show other changes.

THREATS such as written or spoken statements suggesting death or suicide like “I’m tired of living” or “I’m thinking of killing myself.”

SITUATIONS such as events that could trigger suicidal thoughts. This can include having trouble at home, school or work; personal loss of relationships, opportunities, or self-esteem; or any other overwhelming change like moving, a death, or layoff/termination, or expulsion from school.

If you notice these warning signs, your loved one may be thinking about suicide or suffering from a mental health crisis. **Ask the person if they are thinking about suicide** (See “How to Ask about Suicide” page). If your loved one is suffering from suicidal thoughts or plans, see “Taking Action to Keep a Person Safe” page or call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 800-273-TALK (8255).

For more information on how to help someone thinking of suicide, go to the “Get Help” tab on this website: <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org>, or call 800-273-TALK (8255).

HOW TO ASK ABOUT SUICIDE

If you believe your loved one is at risk of suicide, it is very important to ask them directly. A common myth is that asking about suicide will “put the idea into the person’s head”; however, this is not true. Asking about suicide can provide relief by giving the person an opportunity to discuss their feelings and thoughts without judgment. Not asking them leads to more despair and a higher risk of suicide.

Allow the person to talk and share their feelings. Avoid being judgmental or downplaying their thoughts or feelings. Although it may be uncomfortable, it is important to be specific. Ask direct questions about suicide such as these taken from the Columbia-Suicide Severity Rating Scale (C-SSRS) screener:

1. Have you wished you were dead or wished you could go to sleep and not wake up?
2. Have you had any actual thoughts of killing yourself?
3. Have you been thinking about how you would take your life?
4. Have you ever done anything, started to do anything, or prepared to do anything to end your life?

Do not agree to keep the person’s suicidal thoughts a secret. Instead, encourage them to talk about why they are thinking about ending their life. Explain that like any other situation that could cause death (for example a heart attack, injury), you want to help connect them to resources that can help address the problems that have caused them to think about suicide so that life can become more livable. If they have a plan for how they would kill themselves (question #3) or have had past or current suicide behavior (question #4), take them to someone who can complete a suicide risk assessment (ER or mental health professional). If the person has a suicide plan or has past suicide behavior and they refuse your help, tell them you can’t take a chance on losing them and call 911. The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 800-273-TALK (8255) can also help you find resources.



For more information on how to help someone thinking of suicide, go to the “Get Help” tab on this website: <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/> or call 800-273-TALK (8255).



For more information on the C-SSRS, see:
<https://www.stopsuicidenow.org/c-ssrs-initiative>

WORRIED ABOUT A YOUNG PERSON?

As adults we may be confused when a younger person is having a difficult time. We may be unsure about whether or not it is a “normal” part of growing up. Young people may experience emotional and physical changes that may result in a rollercoaster of feelings and emotions.

No matter how difficult the talk, suicide needs to be included as one of the topics that we regularly talk about with a young person in our life. Suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death for young Hoosiers between the ages of 10 and 34. In 2015, Indiana high school students ranked the 3rd highest in the nation for thinking about suicide, and 10th in the nation for attempting suicide. Ignoring this issue can have tragic results.



Tips for talking with youth:

- Give your full attention without multitasking and do more listening than talking.
- Remind the young person that overwhelming and confusing feelings are normal.
- Ask directly about suicide. It will give them permission to talk about it and can reduce the anxiety they are feeling (See “How to Ask about Suicide” page).
- Do not minimize their feelings or compare their troubles to your own.
- Tell them you care and you would like to help.
- Do not promise to keep their suicide thoughts secret.

Trust your instincts. If you are concerned about someone, seek assistance from a doctor, mental health professional, hospital/ER, the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 800-273-TALK (8255), or text **IN** to 741741 or **remedy** to 494949 (faith-based). See also “Taking Action to Keep a Person Safe” page.

Indiana Youth Institute. Kids Count Data Book, 2019 www.iyi.org

For more information on how to help someone thinking of suicide, go to the “Get Help” tab on this website: <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/> or call 800-273-TALK (8255).

TAKING ACTION TO KEEP A PERSON SAFE

If someone we know is struggling with thoughts of suicide, it is important to create a safe environment, and know how to help.

- **Be supportive.** Stay calm, listen, avoid lecturing, take all statements seriously, and do not dare the person to act on their thoughts. You can offer hope that alternatives exist and help find support and resources the person needs.
- **Do not keep suicidal thoughts/plans a “secret.”** Suicide is about life and death. Taking the steps necessary to keep the person safe is an expression of love, care, and concern, just like taking someone to the hospital if they have a broken bone.
- **Gather information.** It is important to know the person's current location, if a suicide plan exists, if the person has access to the method in their plan (e.g. gun, pills), and whether they've had suicide behavior in the past (See “How to Ask about Suicide” page).
- **Do not leave the person alone.** If the person has a suicide plan, stay with the person until you are able to get professional help.
- **Remove potential methods of suicide,** such as pills, knives, razors, firearms, ropes/belts, or anything else you fear they may use. Keep medications, prescription and over-the-counter, in a secure location and give out only as the person needs them.
- **Get professional help and don't handle the situation by yourself.** Do not assume talking with friends and family is enough to manage the suicidal crisis. Call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 800-273-8255 (TALK) for help. If the person has a suicide plan, has past suicide behavior, can't or won't stay safe from suicide, or you feel unsafe, call 911.
- **Safety planning.** Help the person develop a set of steps they promise to follow during a suicidal crisis to keep themselves safe. See “Safety Plan” page.
- **Follow-up.** Suicidal feelings can come and go; check-in or visit them. Professionals can help with suicidal feelings. Make sure that the person attends follow-up appointments (offer to take them), takes prescribed medication correctly, and continues to be seen by a doctor or mental health provider.



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AFTER A SUICIDE ATTEMPT

The reasons for a suicide attempt can vary from person to person, but a common theme is the desire to feel relief from emotional pain. It is likely you were dealing with a variety of stressful feelings and situations before your attempt, which may still be present today. To help reduce your stress as you return to daily life, here are some helpful first steps:



- Decide in advance how to deal with people's questions about your attempt. It is your decision about how much to share, with whom, and when to tell your story. Examples may include, "I have had a rough time and it would be nice to have someone that can listen and not judge me for my actions." Or, "I appreciate your concern, but I am not ready to talk about it yet."
- Focus on connecting to things that make life worth living. The pain in your life may have caused you to pull away from activities and people you enjoy. This is a time to rebuild these connections. See "Finding Hope" page.
- Create a plan to stay safe. It helps to prepare a safety plan in advance that lists coping strategies and resources to help you if suicide thoughts return. See "Safety Planning" page.
- Work with a counselor to help you recover. Although it is tempting to only lean on friends and family, counselors can provide a judgment-free zone and can help you build healthier coping skills. See "Resources" page.
- For additional help, download "A Journey Toward Health and Hope" workbook at store.samhsa.gov



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[Stop Suicide Northeast Indiana at stopsuicidenow.org](https://stopsuicidenow.org)

FINDING HOPE



After a suicide attempt, it may be hard to get back into the swing of things and find joy in life. It took time for your pain to become unbearable; it will also take time for it to go away. Answering the following statements may help you to find hope to go on living.

- The important people in my life are...
- What I have always wanted to do in life is...
- My beliefs about suicide are...
- What I cherish in life is...
- Things I enjoy doing are...
- What gives me a sense of purpose is...
- My other reasons for living are...

Reflecting on what gives life meaning and your hopes and dreams can help you begin to find reasons to go on living. Also, connecting with others, volunteering, starting a gratitude journal, or taking part in acts of kindness can help you heal.

Adapted from “A Journey Toward Health and Hope.” Download or order a free workbook at store.samhsa.gov



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MANAGING SUICIDAL THOUGHTS



It is important to have a plan of action to keep yourself safe as suicidal thoughts may come and go. You may have moments when life feels overwhelming. Instead of struggling with them on your own, you can use the following tools to reduce suicidal thoughts and protect yourself.

Develop a Safety Plan: A safety plan is a list of coping strategies and resources to help you with thoughts of suicide. It lists other ways to ease your pain rather than suicide. Create your own

by using the “Safety Plan” page; you can also download the mobile app *Suicide Safety Plan*.

Hope Box: Build a hope box to remind you why your life is worth living and provide tools to help manage the crisis. It can contain items that represent safety, comfort, distraction, or reasons to live (e.g. letters, pictures, music, poetry, quotes, games, etc.). Whenever you are upset or have thoughts of suicide, open your box or you can use the mobile app Virtual Hope Box.

Hope Cards: Make your own index cards. On one side, write a specific negative thought or statement (e.g. no one cares). On the other side, list phrases and statements that can prove the comment is false (e.g. I know [person] cares because [examples]). Use the cards to manage negative thoughts and feelings. Use the mobile app Virtual Hope Box.

Counseling: When you are in pain it is hard to enjoy life and keep yourself safe. Often those struggling with suicidal thoughts find that counselors can help ease the emotional pain. You may need to try a few counselors to find the right match. See “Resources” page.

For more information about suicide prevention and awareness visit
Stop Suicide Northeast Indiana at stopsuicidenow.org

SAFETY PLANNING

It is important to create a Safety Plan that lists warning signs and steps you can take in case suicidal thoughts return. If you have a smart phone, there are apps to create your own safety plan, such as *Suicide Safety Plan* and *Virtual Hope Box*. You can also print out a template at suicidepreventionlifeline.org or use the one on the back/next page.

Step 1: Self-Awareness. Thoughts, feelings, or behaviors that indicate you're in a bad place emotionally or becoming dangerous to yourself (such as an anniversary of a loss or relationship stress).

Step 2: Action. Things you can do to take care of yourself or distract yourself from negative feelings or thoughts (relaxation, physical activity, visit your hope box).



Step 3: Friendly People. People and places that help you to feel safe, stay connected, or that can provide a healthy distraction.

Step 4: Emotional Support. Names and contact information of friends or relatives you can ask for help from when suicidal thoughts do not go away.

Step 5: Turn to Professionals. When nothing else seems to be helping, you can contact counselors, doctors, or agencies, including the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 800-273-TALK (8255), Crisis Text Line (741741) or RemedyLIVE (494949).

Step 6: Reasons to Live/I Can Get Through This: If you find you are unable or unwilling to follow these steps, you can remind yourself of things that bring you hope and/or are reasons to go on living.

Step 7: Remove risky items. In order to be safe during a crisis, you need to remove or reduce your access to things that can be used to end your life. Ask friends or loved ones to help with this step.

Additional resources include:

- **Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP) classes**
Contact Mental Health America at 260-422-6441
- **Now Matters Now website:** www.nowmattersnow.org

For more information about suicide prevention and awareness visit
Stop Suicide Northeast Indiana at stopsuicidenow.org

My Plan To Keep On Living (Safety Plan)



Self-awareness:

These thoughts / feelings / behaviors tell me I'm in a bad place emotionally, or becoming dangerous to myself:

Action:

When I notice this happening, I will take care of myself by doing these things:

Friendly people and places:

I will go to these people or places to stay connected, or to distract myself (include contact info):

Emotional support:

I will share my feelings with these friends or relatives, and I will ask them for help (include contact info):

Turn to professionals:

When nothing else seems to be helping, I will call on these professionals (include contact info):

yes! I can get through this:

If I find myself unable or unwilling to follow these steps, I will remind myself of these reasons for living:

I need to remove these things from my home to keep me safe from suicide:

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: **1-800-273-8255**
or Crisis Text Line: **Text IN to 741741**

Adapted from Macomb County Suicide Prevention Coalition's Holding on to Life toolkit (www.mcspc.org).

RESOURCES

CRISIS RESOURCES

- **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:** suicidepreventionlifeline.org 800-273-TALK (8255)
- **Crisis Text Line:** Text **IN** to **741741**
- **BeWell Indiana:** bewellindiana.com **211**
- **Trevor Project** (LGBTQ youth and young adults): thetrevorproject.org 866-488-7386 or text **START** to **678678**
- **Trans Lifeline:** hotline.translifeline.org **877-565-8860**
- **RemedyLIVE:** remedylive.com text **remedy** to **494949** (faith-based; youth)
- **Youthline:** 7pm-1am, **877-968-8491**, text **teen2teen** to **839863**

**In case of an
emergency:**

**Call 911 or go to
Emergency Room**

LOCAL RESOURCES

Information and Referral

- **CONNECT Allen County:** www.connectallencounty.com **260-901-5480**
- **Mental Health America of Northeast Indiana:** mhanortheastindiana.org **260-422-6441**
- **Stop Suicide Northeast Indiana:** stopsuicidenow.org **260-422-8412**
- **LookUp Indiana** (online resources): lookupindiana.org

Mental Health Services

- **Bowen Center** (outpatient): bowencenter.org **800-342-5653**
- **Parkview Behavioral Health Institute** (inpatient/outpatient): parkview.com **260-373-7500** (crisis/info), **260-266-2600** (appointments)
- **Northeastern Center** (outpatient): necmh.org **800-790-0118**
- **Headwaters Counseling** (outpatient): **260-744-4326**
- **Meridian Health Services** (outpatient): **260-436-0932**
- **Courageous Healing** (outpatient): www.courageoushealing.org **260-255-3514**
- **Bienestar Sin Fronteras** (outpatient - Spanish): www.bsfindiana.org **260-745-6734**
- **Crosswinds Counseling** (outpatient - faith-based): crosswindscounseling.org **877-594-9204**

(Coming Fall 2022: Maple Heights Behavioral Health Hospital, 260-425-3606)

NATIONAL RESOURCES

- **American Association of Suicidology:** suicidology.org **202-237-2280**
- **American Foundation for Suicide Prevention:** afsp.org **888-333-AFSP (2377)**
- **Suicide Prevention Resource Center:** sprc.org
- **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration:** samhsa.gov

HELPFUL WEBSITES AND APPS

- **Suicide Safety Plan app** (Inquiry Health): Visit Apple or Google Play stores
- **Virtual Hope Box** (phone app): Visit Apple or Google Play stores
- **Got Your Back** (phone app): jacobsswag.org
- **Now Matters Now** (online program): nowmattersnow.org
- **Lifeline For Suicide Attempt Survivors & Families** (online): lifelineforattemptsurvivors.org
- **Suicide is Different** (caregivers): suicideisdifferent.org

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STOP SUICIDE

NORTHEAST INDIANA

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:

1-800-273-TALK (8255) (Available 24/7)

Text **IN** to **741741** (youth & adults) or **remedy** to **494949** (faith-based; youth)



For more information on suicide prevention and awareness contact:

Stop Suicide Northeast Indiana at 260-422-8412

stopsuicidenow.org

THANK YOU TO THE FOLLOWING PARTNERS FOR THEIR SUPPORT



Allen County Drug & Alcohol Consortium, Inc.



**This material is not intended to provide medical advice and is not a substitute for professional advice, diagnosis, or treatment. If you feel you are experiencing a potentially life-threatening problem, please call 9-1-1 or the Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255).*