



## Warning Signs of Suicide

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### Overview

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Warning signs of suicide in adults include:

- Talking or writing about wanting to die or to hurt or kill themselves or someone else.
- Saying they feel hopeless, trapped, without purpose, in pain, or like they're a burden to others.
- Looking for ways to harm themselves. For example, they may buy a gun or stockpile medicines.
- Increasing their use of alcohol or drugs.
- Withdrawing from family, friends, and activities.
- Seeming angry, grumpy, anxious, or depressed.
- Eating or sleeping less or more than usual.
- Doing risky things, like driving too fast.
- Giving away their belongings.

#### Where to get help 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

If you or someone you know talks about suicide, self-harm, a mental health crisis, a substance use crisis, or any other kind of emotional distress, get help right away. You can:

- Call the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline at **988**.
- Call **1-800-273-TALK (1-800-273-8255)**.
- Text **HOME to 741741** to access the Crisis Text Line.

Consider saving these numbers in your phone.

Go to [988lifeline.org](https://www.988lifeline.org) for more information or to chat online.

#### How can you help someone who is suicidal?

If the person has a plan to harm themselves or someone else, call **911**

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### **Other things you can do**

- Consider your own safety. If you feel safe, stay with the person, or ask someone you trust to stay with them, until help arrives.
- Talk about the situation as openly as possible. Tell the person that you don't want them to die or to harm another person.
- Show understanding and compassion. Don't argue with the person or deny their feelings. Arguing with the person may only increase their feeling of being out of control of their life.

### **What puts an adult at risk for suicide?**

It's hard to know if a person is thinking about suicide. But you can look for things that may make suicide more likely. These include their personal history and stressful life changes.

### **Personal history**

People may be more likely to attempt suicide if they:

- Have attempted suicide before.
- Have a family member who has attempted suicide or who has died by suicide.
- Have a mental health problem such as depression, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, or an anxiety disorder.
- Have been through family violence, including physical or sexual abuse.
- Misuse alcohol or drugs (substance use disorder).
- Are LGBTQ+. Issues like discrimination and abuse can contribute to an increased risk.
- Are lonely or don't have many social contacts.
- Are veterans or members of the armed services.
- Have access to means of suicide, such as a gun or pills.

### **Life changes**

Life changes that may increase the risk of suicide include:

- The death of a partner or good friend.
- Stressful life changes, such as retirement, divorce, or money problems.
- Being diagnosed with a serious physical illness, such as cancer or heart disease, or a new physical disability.
- Severe and long-lasting pain.
- Loss of independence or not being able to get around without help.

Take any mention of suicide seriously. If someone talks about suicide, self-harm, or feeling hopeless, get help right away.

## Related Information

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- Bipolar Disorder
- Borderline Personality Disorder
- Depression
- Depression in Children and Teens
- Grief and Grieving
- Suicidal Thoughts or Threats

## Credits

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Note: The "printer friendly" document will not contain all the information available in the online document. Some information (e.g. cross-references to other topics, definitions or medical illustrations) is only available in the online version.

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