Resources
American Association of Suicidology
4201 Connecticut Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20008
202-237-2280
www.suicidology.org

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention
120 Wall Street, 22nd Floor
New York, NY 10005
888-333-AFSP (888-333-2377)
212-363-3500
www.afsp.org

Hotlines
800-784-2433 (800-SUICIDE)
800-621-4000
SuicideHotlines.com
www.suicide-helplines.org
Suicide is the third leading cause of death for 15- to 24-year-olds, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Only accidents and homicides take more lives among this age group.

In the past, suicide was viewed as a sin or a crime. Today we understand that someone who thinks or talks about committing suicide is not bad or weird, but deeply troubled and in need of help. Many depressed people can be helped through counseling and/or medication. Many suicidal people can be helped through their own declaration of intent or by shifting their thinking by listening to what they say. If you hear someone say things like “I can’t go on,” or “I quiero morir,” or “I want to die,” report it.

If you are concerned about a friend, you can help them get help. You can help by getting that help. You can help by listening. You can help by being there. You can help by making plans for safety. You can help by being a friend.

It’s not your fault. They have been incarcerated. They have been exposed to suicidal behavior of others. They have been exposed to legal methods. They have easy access to lethal methods. They have recently been unable to keep up their usual routine. They are a history of suicide in their family. They may have been exposed to alcohol or substance abuse. They are a history of mental disorders. They may have made previous attempts. They may show one or more of the following signs:

• People who are particularly vulnerable to suicide
can help you decide whether your friend needs help. If you or she presents to you as suicidal or otherwise not responsible, go back to your counselor. You are not responsible for the behavior of a counselor. If you identify suicidal tendencies, you must keep in mind that nothing can be done to prevent suicide. You may feel guilty. You may think that if someone you care about becomes a victim of suicide, you caused it. This is not true.

You Can Help by Getting Help

If you have a friend who has threatened or attempted suicide or who hints that he or she might do so (“I’m no good to anybody” or “I won’t be around to bother you any longer” or “I wish I could be with you”), encourage your friend to talk to a trusted adult or to call a hotline. If you think your friend can’t or won’t do this, if you consider this a crisis, you can help by calling a crisis hotline or the National Hopeline Network [888-SUICIDE (888-784-2433)] to get help for your friend. Both hotlines operate 24/7.

You Can Help by Listening

You may not be able to solve your friend’s problems, but you can help by listening. Here are some guidelines:

• Make sure the person knows that you care. Help your friend to know that you are there to listen. If you feel the need to talk about suicide, you can. However, you should not be judgmental. Don’t get involved in a debate about suicide. Don’t try to gloss over the problems or your friend’s feelings. Let your friend talk out their negative feelings. Make sure your friend feels that you are interested in what they are saying. Don’t get bored or impatient. Express your concern but don’t be judgmental. You may be able to solve his or her problems, but you probably won’t be able to solve his or her problems. No matter how much you care about your friend, you may not be able to solve his or her problems. You can, however, be there for emotional support. Make sure your friend knows that you care about them.

Signs That a Person May Need Help

People who are particularly vulnerable to suicide can help you decide whether your friend needs help. You can help by getting that help. You can help by listening. You can help by encouraging your friend to talk to a trusted adult or to call a hotline. If you think your friend can’t or won’t do this, if you’re worried about, and he or she presents to you as suicidal or otherwise not responsible, go back to your counselor. You are not responsible for the behavior of a counselor. If you identify suicidal tendencies, you must keep in mind that nothing can be done to prevent suicide. You may feel guilty. You may think that if someone you care about becomes a victim of suicide, you caused it. This is not true.

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