

What can we do to prevent

Suicide is a worldwide public health issue. People from all cultural, religious, educational and socioeconomic backgrounds can be affected by suicide or suicidal behaviors.

Potentially, everyone has a role in the prevention of suicide. Individuals, communities and governments all can help people in crisis.

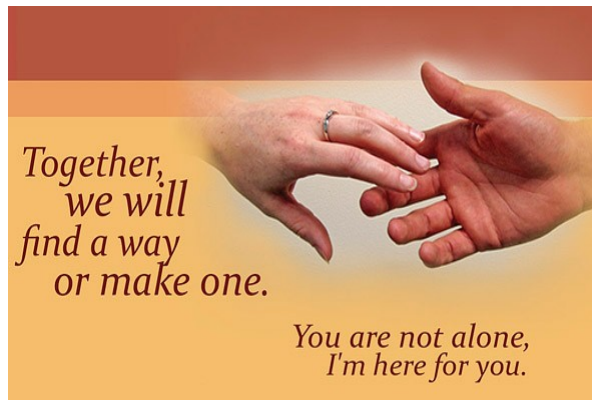
As individuals, we can...

- Learn about suicide, particularly the warning signs that may indicate someone is thinking about or planning suicide
- Ask about suicide directly if someone seems to be at risk
- Show we care by providing support and creating a network of help
- Support community agencies and associations that provide suicide prevention services or information
- Reduce the stigma associated with seeking help for mental health issues or suicide by examining our own attitudes and behaviors
- Offer support to individuals who may be coping with the suicidal behavior of a family member or friend and to those who have been bereaved by suicide
- Take care of our own mental health

You may have to overcome your own discomfort to discuss the issue. Here are some questions you can ask someone you're concerned about:

- Are you thinking about dying?
- Are you thinking about hurting yourself?
- Are you thinking about suicide?
- Have you thought about how you would do it?
- Do you know when you would do it?
- Do you have the means to do it?

Remember, it's not your job to become a substitute for a mental health professional. But these basic questions can help you assess what sort of danger your friend or loved one might pose to themselves and then take appropriate action.



Understanding Suicide



Box 403, 203 Patricia St.
Hudson Bay, SK S0E 0Y0
Phone - (306) 865-3064
Fax - (306) 865-3391

hbfamilyandsupport@sasktel.net
www.hbfamilyandsupport.ca

24Hour Crisis Line
(North East Region)
1-800-611-6349

Why Do People Kill

Experts in the field suggest that a suicidal person is feeling so much pain that they can see no other option. They feel that they are a burden to others and in desperation see death as a way to escape their overwhelming pain and anguish. The suicidal state of mind has been described as constricted, filled with a sense of self-hatred, rejection and hopelessness.

“Suicide is a permanent solution to a temporary problem.”

- Phil Donahue

Recognizing Warning Signs in Others

At times even health care professionals have difficulty determining how close a person may be to attempting suicide. As a friend or family member, you can't know for certain either. If you sense there is a problem, ask the person direct questions and point out behavior patterns that concern you. Remind the person that you care about them and are concerned. Talking about suicide with someone will not plant the idea in his or her head. If necessary, suggest that they make appointment to see

their doctor and offer to go with them if you sense they would have difficulty doing it on their own. If you believe that immediate self-harm is possible, take the person to a doctor or hospital emergency room immediately.

Feelings of despair and hopelessness

Often times, people with depression talk about extreme, feelings of hopelessness, despair and self-doubt with those closest to them. The more extreme these feelings grow, and the more often they are described as "unbearable," the more likely it is that the idea of suicide may enter the person's mind.

Taking care of business

When a person is "winding up his or her affairs" and making preparations for the family's welfare after he or she is gone, it is a good chance they are considering self-harm or suicide.



Rehearsing suicide

Rehearsing suicide, or seriously discussing specific suicide methods, are also indications of a commitment to follow through. Even if the person's suicidal intention seems to come and go, such preparation makes it that much easier for the individual to give way to a momentary impulse.

Drug or alcohol abuse

A person with worsening depression may abuse drugs or alcohol. These substances can worsen symptoms of depression or mania, decrease the effectiveness of medication, enhance impulsive behavior, and severely cloud judgment.

Beginning to feel better

It may sound strange, but a person with depression may be most likely to attempt suicide just when he or she seems to have passed an episode's low point and be on the way to recovery. Experts believe there is an association between early recovery and increased likelihood of suicide. As depression begins to lift, a person's energy and planning capabilities may return before the suicidal thoughts disappear, enhancing the chances of an attempt. Studies show that the period six to twelve months after hospitalization is when patients are most likely to consider or reconsider suicide.