

# WHAT TO DO



## Concerned about suicide and someone you know?

**“If a child tells you they are suicidal, know that it takes great courage to do so, and that they are desperate for help.”**

**If you're at all concerned, trust your instincts. Start a conversation and ask if they're okay. Just showing that you care can make a huge difference.**

Here's some advice on what to do if you're concerned someone is going through a tough time and not coping.

### 1. If you're concerned about someone, talk to them

- Talking about suicide can be hard. If you're not able to start a conversation yet, just show the person that you care. Call a helpline such as Kids Helpline (under 25), Parentline (QLD, NT) or Lifeline for advice.
- When you're ready to talk, find a comfortable and confidential place and time. Ask if they're ok. Tell them you care and want to help.
- Listen to them with your undivided attention for as long as it takes.
- Let them share as much or as little as they want. They may want to unload despair, sadness and anger. If they're not ready for that, respect their choice and remind them you're happy to listen if they want to talk in the future.
- You don't need to be an expert – telling people what you think they should do isn't usually helpful. For example, don't say, “You should get out more” or “You need to eat better”.
- Just acknowledge how they're feeling, and don't make assumptions or judgements about what's going on.
- Reassure them that help is available, that you are there for them, and that things can get better.
- Encourage them to seek professional help and offer to help them do this. For example, sit with them while they call Kids Helpline or go with them to see a doctor.
- It's okay to ask direct questions about suicidal thoughts. For example, you can ask:
  - “Are you having thoughts of suicide?” or “Are you thinking about killing yourself?”
- Ask about their immediate safety:
  - Do they have a specific suicide plan? Have they attempted suicide in the past?
  - If the person seems at immediate risk of harm, read the section on immediate risk on the next page.

### 2. Keep checking in

- Serious suicidal thoughts don't disappear overnight. Even with professional support, it can take a long time for thoughts and feelings to change.
- You can help just by being a friend they can trust and rely on. Keep in touch regularly and continue to show that you care.
- Don't judge them if they're not ready to accept help yet. Keep listening and encouraging them to talk to a professional.

### 3. Look after yourself

- Learning that someone you care about is thinking about suicide can be distressing, and providing support can be challenging. It's important to look after yourself, both for your own sake and so that you can continue to be there for the person you're supporting.
- You may need to talk to someone yourself. This could be family and friends, but if you're not coping you might want to contact a counsellor or psychologist.

**Remember, you are not expected to be a professional counsellor. Serious suicidal thoughts and behaviours can be too much for family and friends to handle alone. If someone is thinking about ending their life, contact a professional. There are several 24/7 helplines available – contact details are provided below.**

## IS SOMEONE AT RISK OF HARM RIGHT NOW?

- If the person has a specific plan for suicide and might be at risk of hurting themselves soon, call a crisis telephone line (see contact details below).
- Remove any dangerous objects like drugs or knives.
- In an emergency dial 000 or take the person to a hospital emergency room.
- Stay with the person until help arrives.
- If you're a young person yourself, call a trusted adult.



## COUNSELLING AND CRISIS SUPPORT INFORMATION

**If you or someone you know is in immediate danger, call 000 for an ambulance.**

- **Kids Helpline – for ages 5-25 to talk about anything at all**  
24/7 phone counselling on 1800 55 1800 or WebChat between 8am and midnight at [kidshelpline.com.au](http://kidshelpline.com.au)
- **Lifeline – all ages, for support in a personal crisis**  
24/7 phone counselling on 13 11 14 or web chat between 7pm and 4am at [lifeline.org.au](http://lifeline.org.au)
- **Suicide Call Back Service – for 15 years and over, support when you or someone you know is feeling suicidal**  
24/7 phone counselling on 1300 659 467 or see [suicidecallbackservice.org.au](http://suicidecallbackservice.org.au)

### Where to find more information:

- **Young people:** [kidshelpline.com.au](http://kidshelpline.com.au), [ReachOut.com](http://ReachOut.com) and [Youthbeyondblue.com](http://Youthbeyondblue.com) have some great resources and information for young people who are going through tough times or feeling suicidal, and for young people concerned about a friend.
- **Adults:** You can read 'Suicide – The Facts' at [kidshelpline.com.au](http://kidshelpline.com.au). [beyondblue.org.au](http://beyondblue.org.au) provide lots of information about anxiety, depression and suicide at any age. If you are a concerned

parent, they have a family guide to youth suicide prevention. [ReachOut.com](http://ReachOut.com) also has a parent site with information to help parents support their teenagers. [Conversationsmatter.com.au](http://Conversationsmatter.com.au) has tips for safe suicide discussions and other resources for both the general public and professionals.

