

Tips for Adults to Talk With Youth About Suicide



1. Know your resources - where will you turn if you find out there is cause for concern? Are there local hotlines? The national hotline is 1-800-273-TALK. In South Central Minnesota, call 1-800-865-0606. See the link on this site to other helpful resources in Minnesota. Other sources of help can be your doctor's office, an emergency room, and 911. In each case, we need to be clear in advocating for the type of situation we are in and be persistent in getting help for someone who needs it.
2. Have plenty of time available in case you find out they or someone they know needs help. You can't put it off - this is something that will require your full attention right away.
3. Be calm. Ask, "Has anyone you know ever thought about suicide? Did they/do they have a plan for how they would do it? Recently?"
4. Let them know you care about them and that you will always be there to listen if they or anyone they care about ever does need help with thoughts of suicide. Let them know of resources in the community where you can go to get help for them or a friend. Let them know it's okay to ask for help.
5. Ask them what they would do if they were ever feeling like everything was going wrong in their life.
6. Talk about healthy ways to cope. How can they help themselves feel better when they are angry or disappointed?
7. Make a list with them of various people in their life they could talk to other than you. Have them keep a list of phone numbers posted somewhere.
8. Let these important people know they are on the list. Encourage those people to touch base with them frequently too.
9. Remember to revisit this conversation periodically with this special young person and mentor them in help seeking. Role modeling is the best teacher.
10. If they or someone they know is in crisis, follow the Yellow Ribbon card protocol to Stay, Listen, and Get Help. Stay with them as their lifeline, listen non judgmentally, and follow through to getting them to immediate help. Refer to your resources. Advocate for results.