

What Are The Warning Signs For Suicide?

Seek help as soon as possible by contacting a mental health professional or by calling the **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK** if you or someone you know exhibits any of the following signs:

- Threatening to hurt or kill oneself or talking about wanting to hurt or kill oneself
- Looking for ways to kill oneself by seeking access to firearms, available pills, or other means
- Talking or writing about death, dying, or suicide when these actions are out of the ordinary for the person
- Feeling hopeless
- Feeling rage or uncontrolled anger or seeking revenge
- Acting reckless or engaging in risky activities - seemingly without thinking
- Feeling trapped - like there's no way out
- Increasing alcohol or drug use
- Withdrawing from friends, family, and society
- Feeling anxious, agitated, or unable to sleep or sleeping all the time
- Experiencing dramatic mood changes
- Seeing no reason for living or having no sense of purpose in life

You cannot predict death by suicide, but you can identify people who are at increased risk for suicidal behavior, take precautions, and refer them for effective treatment.

Ask the person directly if he or she (1) is having suicidal thoughts/ideas, (2) has a plan to do so, and (3) has access to lethal means:

“Are you thinking about killing yourself?”

“Have you ever tried to kill yourself before?”

“Do you think you might try to kill yourself today?”

“Have you thought of ways that you might kill yourself?”

“Do you have pills/weapons in the house/room?”

This *won't* increase the person's suicidal thoughts. It *will* give you information that indicates how strongly the person has thought about killing him- or herself.

Take seriously all suicide threats and all suicide attempts. A past history of suicide attempts is one of the strongest risk factors for death by suicide.

There is no evidence that “no suicide contracts” prevent suicide. In fact, they may give counselors a false sense of reassurance.

(continued next page)

Listen and look for red flags for suicidal behavior, indicated by the mnemonic:

IS PATH WARM?

Ideation—Threatened or communicated

Substance abuse—Excessive or increased

Purposeless—No reasons for living

Anxiety—Agitation/Insomnia

Trapped—Feeling there is no way out

Hopelessness

Withdrawing—From friends, family, society

Anger (uncontrolled)—Rage, seeking revenge

Recklessness—Risky acts, unthinking

Mood changes (dramatic)

Act.

If you think the person might harm him- or herself, do not leave the person alone. Say, “I’m going to get you some help.”

Call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, 1-800-273-TALK. You will be connected to the nearest available crisis center. Or...

Go to SAMHSA’s Mental Health Services Locator (www.mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/databases/) or Substance Abuse Treatment Facility Locator (<http://dasis3.samhsa.gov>). Or:

If you are on the Earlham College, campus, contact your Area Director or Campus Safety and Security (x1400) – they can page the counselor on call.