



Cheat Sheet: How to Help a Friend Considering Suicide

Introduction

If you have a friend who you think is considering suicide, you may feel lost or wonder what the right thing to do is or whether you should do anything at all. While there is no one right thing to say or do, this cheat sheet will help you to have something to say when saying nothing can have dire consequences and to avoid doing things which are not helpful.

What To Do

- ✓ Take every mention of suicide seriously.
- ✓ Ask directly “Are you thinking about suicide?” Asking about it will not put the idea in their head.
- ✓ Listen and be supportive.
- ✓ Offer them hope.
- ✓ Don’t judge.
- ✓ Validate their emotions.
- ✓ Watch for unspoken emotions.
- ✓ Make yourself available to your friend. Be gentle but persistent in offering help.
- ✓ Know the warnings signs and risk factors for suicide.
- ✓ Don’t be afraid to talk about it. Talk about their emotions.
- ✓ Let them know that they are important to you.
- ✓ Reassure them that thoughts of suicide are nothing to be afraid of and it took courage to talk about it.
- ✓ Ask about their support network (family, friends, teachers, pastors, etc.)
- ✓ Tell an adult (parent, friend’s parent, teacher, pastor, school counselor).
- ✓ Find out what kind of help your school has available.
- ✓ Seek professional help.

What Not To Do

- ✓ Don’t wait (safe not sorry)
- ✓ Do not make any deals.
- ✓ Do not agree to keep it to yourself.
- ✓ Don’t leave them alone.
- ✓ Don’t try to argue someone out of suicide.
- ✓ Avoid simplistic or spiritualized answers.
- ✓ Don’t lecture.

**IF YOU OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW IS CONSIDERING SUICIDE,
PLEASE CALL THE NATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION LIFELINE AT
1-800-273-TALK (8255)**

Hope 4 Hurting Kids Cheat Sheets are one page resources designed to provide a high-level overview of the topic covered. They are not intended as a comprehensive resource, and we encourage you to check out <http://Hope4HurtingKids.com> for more information.