Suicide Awareness

Deaths by suicide are on the rise, and affect people of all ages and walks of life. The death of a loved one by suicide is a difficult loss to grieve, and may put family and friends at increased risk of suicidal thoughts or actions.

While many people have suicidal thoughts, they are most prevalent in young adults ages 18-25. Those who seriously consider suicide may:

- Feel hopeless or see no way out of their problems
- Struggle to get attention or support
- Be experiencing persistent physical or emotional pain, with no relief in sight

Signs that a person may be considering suicide include:

- Talking about committing suicide
- Deep depression or feelings of hopelessness
- A recent severe loss or series of losses
- A history of previous suicide attempts
- A preoccupation with suicide
- Giving away prized possessions or memorabilia
- Drastic or uncharacteristic changes in behavior
- Seeming happier or calmer after a period of depression
- Withdrawal from friends or social activities
- Risky behavior, such as driving dangerously or abusing alcohol or drugs

If you are concerned that a friend, loved one, or colleague may be suicidal, reach out. These steps may be helpful:

- **Be direct.** Calmly ask, “Are you thinking about hurting yourself?”
- **Listen.** Let the person express their feelings without interruption.
- **Get involved.** Be available. Show interest and support.
- **Remove means.** Suicide is sometimes an impulsive act. If the person lives in your home, remove weapons or pills.
- **Offer hope.** Tell the person you care about them and want them in the world. Encourage them to speak with their therapist (if they have one) or help them connect with professional assistance.
- **Seek help.** LifeMatters is available 24/7/365, as are most suicide hotlines.

Things to avoid include:

- **Don’t debate.** Arguments about whether suicide is moral or religious lectures are not helpful.
- **Don’t treat it like a joke.** If someone says they are considering suicide, take it seriously.
- **Don’t be sworn to secrecy.** Tell the person you will protect their privacy as much as you can, but their safety comes first.

LifeMatters is available 24/7/365 to help you cope with your own suicidal thoughts or support you in helping a friend, family member, or colleague. Please call.

Call LifeMatters® by Empathia toll-free anytime. 1-800-367-7474

Assistance with Life, Work, Family, and Wellbeing • 24/7/365
Call collect to 262-574-2509 if outside of North America
Visit LifeMatters® online at mylifematters.com
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Language assistance services in your preferred spoken and written languages are available at no cost by calling 1-800-367-7474.
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