

KNOW! THAT YOU CAN HELP PREVENT SUICIDE

SEPTEMBER, 2025



Worried your child might be having suicidal thoughts, but not sure how to start the conversation? You're not alone.

Talking about mental health and suicide can be overwhelming, especially with your own child. The stigma is real, but so is the fact that just one conversation can make a difference. No one should struggle alone. Help, healing, and hope are possible.

THIS SUICIDE PREVENTION MONTH, USE THE TIPS BELOW TO START A CONVERSATION AND BE THE DIFFERENCE IN SOMEONE'S LIFE.

1. Ask Directly

It may seem awkward, but asking about suicide directly is better than avoiding the subject. Questions like "How are you feeling?" and "Are you thinking about suicide?" open the door for honest conversations. For young people with thoughts of suicide, being asked about it can be a relief.

Avoid shaming language like "You're not thinking of killing yourself, are you?" Instead, keep your tone calm, caring, and non-judgmental, and reassure them that you are a safe person to talk to.

TALKING TIP

2. Listen and Validate

It can be overwhelming to hear that your loved one has or has had thoughts of suicide. Take the time to truly listen to what they share and respond with validating statements to help them feel less alone.

Caring responses acknowledge their pain and encourage them to continue sharing. Try saying, "What you're going through sounds really difficult; thank you for telling me. I don't have all the answers, but I am here to listen."

TALKING TIP

3. Be There for Them

Show your child they're not alone by being present, whether in person, over the phone, or by text. Be realistic about what support you can provide and follow through on what you promise. If you can't be there for them, help them identify someone who can.

When you're together, let them share freely. Acknowledge how hard it is to manage strong emotions and reassure them that it's okay to talk about it.

TALKING TIP

Prevention
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4. Help Them Connect

Your child's safety comes first. If you feel that they are unsafe, you should take immediate action to connect them with someone who can help. You might connect them to their therapist, text or call 988, the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline with them, or drive them to the emergency room. If there is an immediate risk of harm, you should call 911 and ask for support for a mental health crisis.

If they are not in immediate crisis, help them connect with ongoing support, such as a therapist, school counselor, or pediatrician. Include them in the decision-making process and provide space for them to ask questions.

If your child resists, try saying: "I'm really worried about your safety, and I want to connect you with someone who can help." Or, "There are hotlines with trained people who want to listen—would you like me to sit with you while you text one?"

5. Check In Regularly

Don't wait for a crisis. Make it a habit to check in on your child's feelings regularly. This builds trust and normalizes conversations about mental health.

Ask open-ended questions. You might say something like, "I know it's a stressful time right now with [final exams, college applications, sports tryouts, etc.]. How's that been affecting you?" to kick off a conversation.

6. Take Care of Yourself

Supporting someone who is struggling can take a toll. Be honest about what you can handle and reach out for your own support when needed. Talking to a trusted friend or a mental health professional can help you manage the stress that comes with caring for someone in crisis.

Remember: Suicide can be prevented.

Starting the conversation can make all the difference. You don't have to have all the answers. Showing up, listening, and connecting your child to support is a great place to start.

RESOURCES

Suicide & Crisis Lifeline: 988
Crisis Text Line: Text HOME to 741741

- [What to Expect - 988 Lifeline](#)
- [Crisis Text Line | Text HOME to 741741 Free, 24/7 Mental Health Support](#)
- [Talking to Kids about Mental Health - The Kids Mental Health Foundation](#)
- [What You Need to Know About Youth Suicide | National Alliance on Mental Illness \(NAMI\)](#)
- [What to Do If Your Child Is in Crisis | National Alliance on Mental Illness \(NAMI\)](#)
- [Helpful Resources | Ohio Suicide Prevention Foundation](#)
- [Know! That You Can Talk About Mental Health — Even If It's Hard](#)
- [When to Call 911/When to Call 988 | Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services](#)

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Tips for Everyone:

