

Sample Guide to Helping Someone Who's Suicidal

Note: The Information contained in the documentation below is meant for informational purposes only and is not intended to be a substitute for the expertise of a mental health professional. Its goal is to give you a framework in which you can work from, to guide you in the direction of a said metal health professional(s) IF YOU KNOW SOMEONE WHO IS AT RISK OF HURTING THEMSELVES CALL: (Crisis Services Canada [Call 1.833.456.4566](tel:18334564566) or 911

To keep it lighter, I will refer to the suicidal individual asking for help as the "Asking individual"

Asking individual to his best friend: "Hey, do you have a minute? I really need to talk?"

After you acknowledge them with "Sure, what's up? Let them talk. It is absolutely necessary for you to listen in a calm, open posture. You need to let them lead the conversation, again, let them talk! Do not interrupt.

Asking individual: "I have been feeling so down lately, I mean, like more than usual. "I mean, I have been feeling down for a long time, but you know?"

This type of statement should serve as a cue for you to listen. Stop what you are doing and face your friend, loved one, co-worker etc. Keep yourself open, uncross your arms and legs; this will help the asking individual to see that you are a safe place for them to talk about what's plaguing them. Respond with:

Friend: "What's going on that's making you feel worse?"

Adding "feeling worse" will invite them to talk about what's going on with them right now.

Statements to avoid:

“don't talk that way.”

“Well, I have problems too.”

“You're just going through a rough patch, you'll be ok.”

“It could always be worse.”

Asking individual: “Well, I have depression and the pain is so intense and so overwhelming lately, that I feel relieved when I think about, you know, ending my life.”

You're going to feel a bit panicked and feel like it's too sensitive of a problem. “What if I drive them to do it if I say the wrong thing?” However, the research shows that talking about suicide does not drive someone to carry them with it... Remember, it's about ending the pain, again, listen.

Friend: “Man, that sounds tough, is there anything I can do to help? Do you have a plan?”

If their answer is yes, this is indication that they are in a place where they are more likely to follow through with their plan..... ALWAYS, ALWAYS, ALWAYS TAKE THEM SERIOUSLY, especially when they say they have a plan..... This needs immediate intervention. Ask:

Friend: “Tell me about what your plan looks like?”

When they tell you they have a plan, this should be considered a **mental health crisis**.; They may even tell you all the detail of said plan, Therefore, you need to enlist the help of a mental health professional. Even if they don't want you to,

calling mental health is essential. Many places have a mental health crisis team. Here are the ones available in Nova Scotia

1-888-429-8167 (toll free) (Nova Scotia) 911 in your local area.

Telephone crisis support, and mobile response support are offered for work, home, school, and community agencies Service is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Or go to

[Crisis Services Canada](#)

Communities Addressing Suicide Together (CAST)

Nova Scotia Supports and Services

CAST works with communities in Nova Scotia to build and strengthen their capacity to address suicide at the local level.

Website: <https://novascotia.cmha.ca/programs-services/communities-addressing-suicide-together-cast/>

CAST helpful Links and resources

<https://novascotia.cmha.ca/mental-health/find-help/>

The Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA)

is a national voluntary association that exists to promote the mental health of all people. CMHA believes that everyone should have choices so that when they need to, they can reach out to family, friends, formal services, self-help groups or community-based organizations.

Website: novascotia.cmha.ca

Support Groups In Nova Scotia

S.O.S Nova Scotia

The S.O.S. group in Nova Scotia is a self help group that was developed to provide individuals and families who have suffered a loss of a loved one with a critical resource.

The group meetings are scheduled every second Wednesday of each month

Website: sosnovascotia.com

Bereaved Parents of Adult Children Support Group

The Group meets third Tuesday every month

Contact: Louise Smith (902) 576-2697 louisessmith_27@hotmail.ca

or Vince MacDonald (902) 462-4050 tapper@ns.sympatico.ca

Suicide Prevention

[Communities Addressing Suicide Together](#)

[The Youth Project](#)

[Research](#)

[Where To Go For Help](#)

Saying, “is there anything I can do to help? can make one further feel safe and comfortable. Furthermore, your efforts may leave them feeling like you do indeed care about their wellbeing. If they say I don’t know. Be silent, let them think about how you may be able to help. If after a few moments they say,

Asking individual: “Well I don’t know”

You can respond with:

Friend: [That’s ok, thanks for letting me know how you are feeling. We can figure this out together, you’re not alone.](#)”

Mental illness by its very nature, often makes suffers feel alone, so walking beside them every step of the way will be an immeasurable help and provide them with a much-needed sense of relief. Your empathy and understanding can help them take a step back from the cliff. Just listening is amazing. On top of that, knowing you will help them can help them breathe a sigh of relief... But mean what you say! Follow through is essential.

Note: If you, for whatever reason, feel like you are in over your head, be honest but let them know that you will be with them every step of the way to help them get the help they need; Eg.

Offer to help them look for the resources in your area. Mental health centers, helplines, websites, etc. Because they may not have the mental strength to do these things, playing a supportive role with “getting them what they need” rather than trying to help them deal with their mental health directly is a HUGE help. You can: offer them a ride to the resources, check in on them, and offer to be there when and if they need you to be when they tell other loved ones.

Anything and everything you can do. Just be sure to be empathetic and nonjudgmental.....this is a real, medical problem that requires the same type of understanding you would apply to any other health condition. For example, if your friend had a heart attack and couldn't drive, chances are, you would offer to help take him to their doctor's office. the support for a mental or physical ailment are similar. Mental health conditions make us feel uncomfortable, leaving us with the perception that we should run from itSupport looks the same for both.... Empathy, listening and support.

Looking after the "logistics" is a measure of ones care for the hurting individual.