

Preventing Suicide

ASK FOR AND OFFER THE RIGHT SUPPORT TO KEEP GOING

Issue:

Knowing that you need to “reach out for help” when dealing with suicidal ideations is hard enough, but knowing HOW to reach out is even harder. And knowing what to do when someone reaches out to you can feel like it requires a master’s degree and a clinical license.

Goal:

Realize that you don’t need the perfect words or extensive expertise. Find or be someone who can create a safe space for talking openly without judgment, then work together to see what next steps will help the one who’s suffering stay long enough to keep getting better until they can thrive.



You can learn more about taking the well-meaning advice to “reach out for help” from vague to concrete from the Therapist Corner segment by Amanda R. Riley, MA, RP, in the post “Beyond ‘Reach Out’” at newsletter.thedailywellness.com.



Live Oak Mental Wellness Project is working to make mental health support more accessible. We share information about improving your mental wellness at home, host mental wellness workshops to practice putting theories into action, and partner with others in the mental health field to create new resources in person and in print to help you learn how to make your life the very best it can be.

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Get Ready, Then Make It Happen

- 1. Make time** - If you're reaching out for help, say something like, "Hey, things have been really bad for me lately. Can we schedule a time to talk soon?" If you're reaching out to support, try something like, "Hey, I feel like things have been off with you lately. Want to go for a walk this weekend and talk things out?" What's an opening line that feels right for you?

- 2. Be real** - Asking for help: Talk about your situation and what you're going through. If you're not sure if they can handle the Big Topic, ask. "This is pretty intense; are you sure you're up for it? It's been so bad that I feel like ending my life is the only way out." Offering support: Talk about what you've noticed and state your concern. "You haven't been yourself for a while, and I'm starting to worry that you might be thinking about an irreversible solution. Are you considering suicide?" What can you say to introduce this topic into the conversation?

- 3. Bring in professionals** - Some things really do need a lot of education and training to handle thoroughly. Ask for or offer help to find a mental health professional who can help treat the current struggles by slowly working toward the root and building a structure of reflection and coping strategies along the way. What's one way you might bring this outside resource up?

- 4. Stay connected** - Talking with a professional doesn't replace staying connected with friends, both the one in this conversation and others who can form a strong network of support for the days and years to come. How will you ask for or offer this ongoing personal support?

You can learn more about warning signs, what to do (including emergency intervention), and what not to say or do from the article "What To Do When You Think Someone is Suicidal: A Guide to Taking Action" on mentalhealthhotline.org.



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