

- **Act.**

- If you think the person might harm him- or herself or attempt suicide, do not leave the person alone.
- Say, "I'm going to get you some help."
- In CT, dial 2-1-1 or 1-800-273-TALK for the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, or visit www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org ; or
- Use the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration Locator or Substance Abuse Treatment Facility Locator at www.findtreatment.samhsa.gov ; or
- Visit the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention-Coping with Suicide site www.afsp.org/coping-with-suicide/find-support



Assessing Suicide Risk: Initial Tips for Clinicians

1 WORD
VOICE
L I F E

Be the **1** to start the **conversation**

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What To Do If You Think a Person Is Having Suicidal Thoughts

You cannot predict death by suicide, but you can identify people who are at increased risk for suicidal behavior, take precautions, and refer them for effective treatment.

- **Ask** the person directly if he or she (1) is having suicidal thoughts/ideas, (2) has a plan to do so, and (3) has access to lethal means:

- "Are you thinking about killing yourself?"
- "Have you ever tried to kill yourself before?"
- "Do you think you might try to kill yourself today?"
- "Have you thought of ways that you might kill yourself?"
- "Do you have pills/weapons in the house?"

▶ This won't increase the person's suicidal thoughts. It will give you information that indicates how strongly the person has thought about killing him- or herself.

- ▶ Take seriously all suicide threats and all suicide attempts. A past history of suicide attempts is one of the strongest risk factors for death by suicide.
- ▶ There is no evidence that "no- suicide contracts" prevent suicide. In fact, they may give counselors a false sense of reassurance.
- **Listen and look** for red flags for suicidal behavior, indicated by the mnemonic:

IS PATH WARM?

Ideation- Threatened or communicated
Substance abuse- Excessive or increased

Purposeless- No reasons for living

Anxiety- Agitation/Insomnia

Trapped- Feeling there is no way out

Hopelessness

Withdrawing- From friends, family, society

Anger (uncontrolled)- Rage, seeking revenge

Recklessness- Risky acts, unthinking

Mood changes (dramatic)