

I ACTT

Being There for Each Other

Being a teen can be tough. Did you know that suicide is the second leading cause of death for young people ages 10-19? There's something important to remember: There's always hope and help. You're not alone.

As teens, you're often the first to notice when something's up with a friend or sibling. They are most likely to turn to you for emotional support when they're struggling. That's why it's crucial to know the signs and what to do if you're worried about someone. Remember IACTT to support your peers:

- I IDENTIFY** signs and symptoms.
- A ASK** questions to learn more about what is going on and ask if the person is thinking about suicide.
- C COMMUNICATE** empathy, care, and compassion.
- T TAKE ACTION!**
- T TAKE CARE** of yourself.

IDENTIFY Signs and Symptoms (FACT)

Feelings:

- Hopeless "Things will never get better."
- Worthless "Everyone would be better off without me."
- Helpless "I can't do anything right."
- Continual sadness.
- Guilt or shame.
- Feeling trapped.
- Struggling with strong or ongoing anger or anxiety.

Actions:

- Showing aggression, rage, or seeking revenge.
- Acting without thinking.
- Withdrawing from friends and family.
- Getting into trouble at school or home.
- Increasing drug and/or alcohol use.
- Talking, texting, or posting on social media about themes of death or destruction.

Changes:

- Noticeable shifts in personality: not acting like themselves.
- Difficulty concentrating.
- Losing interest in things they used to love.
- Increased struggles at school or work.
- Drastic changes in mood.
- Sudden improvement after being down or withdrawn.

Threats:

- Talking or writing about suicide.
- Giving away prized possessions.
- Writing a suicide note.
- Saying things like:
 - "I won't be around much longer."
 - "You won't have to worry about me soon."
- Writing, drawing, talking about death a lot.

If you are worried about someone, don't wait, ACTT right away!

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I ACTT: Being There for Each Other

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ASK questions to learn more about what is going on and ask if the person is thinking about suicide.

- You can say things like:
 - “You seem sad lately, what is going on?”
 - “I haven’t seen you at practice lately and I am worried. How are you doing?”
 - ASK if they are thinking about suicide. Asking is the right thing to do. Asking does not put ideas in their head.
 - “Are you thinking about harming yourself?”
 - “Are you thinking about suicide?”
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COMMUNICATE empathy, care, and compassion.

- There is no exact right way to do this and no perfect thing to say to show you care.
 - Use words:
 - “I am here for you.”
 - “We can get help together.”
 - Use actions:
 - A hug.
 - A listening ear.
 - Spending time with them.
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TAKE Action.

- Any time we are concerned about our own or another person’s mental health, we should get help from a trusted adult. We don’t have to manage it on our own.
 - If someone talks about suicide, **DON’T LEAVE THEM ALONE. GET HELP RIGHT AWAY.**
 - Take them to a trusted adult (parent or guardian, relative, counselor, teacher, coach, faith leader) at school or home.
 - Reach out to a hotline for help and support:
911
988
Text HOPELINE to 741741
Trevor Project - Text 678-678
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TAKE Care of yourself.

- When you help someone who is in crisis, you may need help too.
 - Talk to someone you trust about how you are feeling.
 - Give yourself what you need.
 - Exercise, eat right, and get enough rest.
 - Do things that make you feel happy.
 - Remember, you don’t have to manage this alone. There are people who care and want to help.
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References:

Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS). Suicide in Wisconsin: Impact and Response. Accessed April 17, 2024. <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/publications/p02657.pdf>.

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI). Wisconsin Youth Risk Behavior Survey. Accessed April 17, 2024. <https://dpi.wi.gov/sspw/yrbs>.