



A standalone guide

✿ SUICIDE PREVENTION

When someone you love may be suicidal

A calm, plain guide for when you are scared a loved one may be suicidal: what to do right now, the warning signs, how to ask plainly, and how to stay. If you need help now, call Tele-MANAS at 14416.

Who this is for: friends, partners and family of someone who may be thinking about suicide.

If it is urgent: call Tele-MANAS 14416, do not leave them alone, and reach emergency services on 112.

Read it free at weave.clinic/family

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✿ IF THEY ARE IN DANGER RIGHT NOW

Start here, do this first

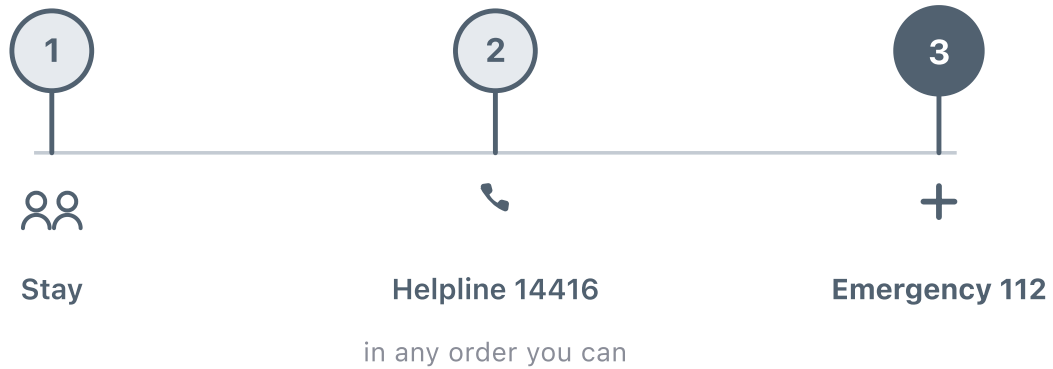
✿ IN SHORT

If you think someone may be about to harm themselves, do not wait and do not leave them alone. Stay with them, or get someone trusted to stay. Call Tele-MANAS, the free national mental health helpline, on 14416. If there is a medical emergency, call 112. A suicidal crisis is usually a moment that can pass with help.

Being the person who notices is frightening, and you may not feel ready. You do not need to be a doctor or have the right words. The most important thing is simple: stay close, and connect them to help. Thoughts of suicide are a sign of deep pain, a crisis that very often passes once the pain is met with help. It is not a decision already made.

Suicide is preventable. The first response is to stay, and to get help.

If the danger feels immediate right now, do these three things, in any order you can.



If the danger feels immediate. You do not need the perfect words, only to stay and connect them to help.

Stay with them, or make sure someone they trust does. Do not leave them alone.

Call Tele-MANAS free on 14416, any time, day or night.

For a medical emergency, call 112.

Take it seriously, stay calm, and keep them company while help comes.

More, if you want it ^

You may worry that calling a helpline or emergency services is an overreaction. It is not. If you are scared for someone's safety, that fear is reason enough to reach out now. Helplines exist exactly for this, including for family members who are worried about someone else and do not know what to do. You can call 14416 yourself, even before you have spoken to the person, just to ask what to do next.

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✿ WHAT TO WATCH FOR

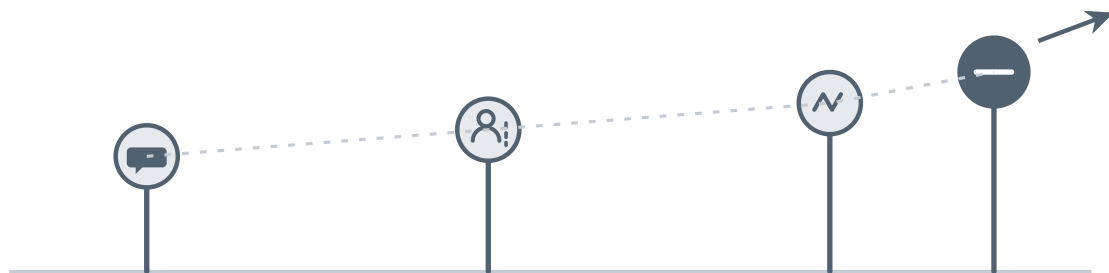
The warning signs

✿ IN SHORT

Some signs suggest a person may be at risk: talking about wanting to die or being a burden, pulling away from people, big changes in mood or behaviour, giving away their things, drinking or using more, or a sudden calm after a stretch of distress. No single sign is proof, but several together are a reason to reach out, not to wait.

Most people who are struggling give some sign, even if it is quiet. They may say things like "everyone would be better off without me," or "I just want it to stop." They may withdraw from family and friends, lose interest in things they cared about, sleep or eat very differently, or seem to give up on the future. Some start giving away things that matter to them, or drinking and using more than before.

One sign can fool you. A person who has seemed deeply low may suddenly appear calm or settled. That calm can be a relief to those around them, but sometimes it follows a decision and is itself a warning. You do not have to be certain. Noticing is enough of a reason to reach out.



no single sign is proof; several together, reach out

Signs worth noticing. No single one is proof, but several together mean it is time to reach out gently.

Talk of wanting to die, feeling hopeless, or being a burden to others.

Pulling away from people and from things they used to enjoy.

Marked changes in mood, sleep, or daily behaviour.

Giving away belongings, or a sudden calm after a hard stretch.

● TRY THIS

If a few of these fit someone you love, do not talk yourself out of it. Pick a quiet, private moment in the next day or two, sit with them, and gently start the conversation. Worrying and saying nothing is harder on you, and on them, than asking.

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✿ THE MOST USEFUL THING YOU CAN DO

Asking directly

✿ IN SHORT

Ask plainly and calmly whether they are thinking about suicide. Many people fear that asking will plant the idea. The evidence says it does not. Asking openly does not increase suicidal thinking, and being asked can bring relief. This is a skill, and you can learn it.



Asking directly and gently does not plant the idea. It opens a door.

The biggest reason people stay silent is the fear that naming it will make it worse, that asking "are you thinking of ending your life?" might put the thought there. It is a kind fear, and it is wrong. A careful review of the research found that asking people about suicidal thoughts did not increase those thoughts. If anything, being asked openly, by someone who cares, can lower the distress, because the person no longer has to carry it alone in secret.

So ask. Not in a panic, and not in a whisper that hopes for "no." Find a private, unhurried moment, and ask simply. You can say, "I have noticed you have not seemed yourself, and I am worried about you. Are you having thoughts of ending your life?" Plain words are kinder than careful ones here. They tell the person that you can hear the real answer, and that you will not look away.

Asking the question plainly, and meaning it, is one of the most caring things you can do.

More, if you want it ^

If the answer is yes, try not to react with shock or argument. A steady "thank you for telling me, you are not alone in this" does more than any clever reply. You do not have to fix it in that moment. You only have to stay, keep listening, and move together toward help. If the answer is no but your worry remains, you can still say, "I am glad, and I am here if that ever changes." You have opened a door, and that door stays open.

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✿ STAYING WITH THEM

How to respond

✿ IN SHORT

Listen without judging or arguing. Take what they say seriously. Stay with them. Then help them get to professional support, together. Being heard and taken seriously is, by itself, a real help.



Listen, stay, take it seriously, and reach for help together. You do not have to carry this alone, and neither do they.

When someone tells you they are struggling, the pull is to fix it fast, to reassure, to point out reasons to live. Try instead to slow down and listen. Let them say the hard things without rushing to argue them out of it. Do not minimise it with "you have so much to live for," and do not make them feel judged. Just being heard, and taken seriously, is itself one of the things that helps most.

Then move toward help, together. Offer to sit with them while they call Tele-MANAS on 14416, or to go with them to a doctor or counsellor. Take it seriously, stay with them, and get help together, not alone. Going with someone removes the hardest step, the first one. If you are speaking publicly or in a group about any of this, keep it hopeful and help-focused, and leave out any detail about methods, which can do harm.

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✿ THE SINGLE MOST EFFECTIVE STEP

Reducing access to harm

✿ IN SHORT

One of the most effective things that prevents suicide is reducing a person's access to the means of harm while they are in crisis. You do not need to know specifics. The idea is simple: if dangerous things are harder to reach in the worst moment, the crisis has time to pass. This is a concrete, high-impact step a family can take.

A suicidal crisis is often short, and the most dangerous window can be brief. That is exactly why this step matters so much. If the means to act are not within easy reach during that window, many people come through it. Research on what actually prevents suicide points to this again and again: safely limiting access to means saves lives, and the World Health Organization lists it as a core, evidence-based step.

In practice this means quietly making the home safer while someone is in crisis: keeping medicines, and anything that could be used to cause harm, out of easy reach, and held by someone else for a while. You do not need a plan for every detail. Doing this gently, and without shame, is one of the most protective things a family can do.



Making the worst moment safer. A crisis often passes; the aim is to get a person through it safely.

A suicidal crisis is often short, and the riskiest window can be brief.

If dangerous things are harder to reach, the crisis has time to pass.

Keep medicines and anything harmful out of easy reach for now.

Ask someone trusted to help hold them safely, without shame.

REMEMBER

You cannot watch someone every second, and you are not meant to. The aim is not perfect control. It is to lower the risk in the hardest moments and to keep them connected to help and to people. Smaller, steady steps, taken together, are what carry a person through.

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✿ AFTER THE WORST HAS PASSED

Afterward, and looking after yourself

✿ IN SHORT

Getting through a crisis is the beginning, not the end. Keep them connected to ongoing help, and keep checking in gently. And look after yourself too. Carrying someone else's safety is heavy, and you cannot pour from an empty cup. Your own support is not a luxury, it is part of keeping them safe.

When the immediate danger passes, the work is not over, and that is not a failure. Recovery is uneven. Stay close in the days and weeks after, keep gently checking in, and help them hold on to professional support rather than letting it quietly drop. A simple "how are you really doing today?" keeps the door open. The person needs to know that you did not just show up for the emergency, but that you are still here.

You matter in this too. Being the one who notices, who asks, who stays, takes a real toll. You cannot keep someone else safe if you are running on empty. Tell another trusted person what you are carrying so you are not alone with it. You are allowed to feel scared, tired, or out of your depth. Reaching out for your own support, including the same helplines, is part of doing this well, not a sign that you are failing them.

 KEEP THIS NUMBER CLOSE

If you, or the person you love, are not safe right now, you do not have to handle it alone. Call Tele-MANAS, the free national mental health helpline, on 14416, any time, day or night. For a medical emergency, call 112. The crisis card below lists more people you can reach.

 TRY THIS

Save Tele-MANAS 14416 in your phone now, before you need it. Then send the person you are worried about a simple "thinking of you, I am here." Small, steady contact is part of what keeps someone going.

WHERE THIS COMES FROM

Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India. Tele-MANAS: National Tele Mental Health Programme of India (toll-free helpline 14416 / 1-800-891-4416).

telemanas.mohfw.gov.in/home

World Health Organization. Preventing suicide: a resource for media professionals, update 2023.

[who.int/publications/i/item/9789240076846](https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240076846)

National Health Service (UK). Help for suicidal thoughts. [nhs.uk/mental-health/feelings-symptoms-behaviours/behaviours/help-for-suicidal-thoughts](https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/feelings-symptoms-behaviours/behaviours/help-for-suicidal-thoughts)

Dazzi T. Does asking about suicide and related behaviours induce suicidal ideation? What is the evidence?. *Psychol Med*, 2014. doi.org/10.1017/S0033291714001299

Mann JJ. Suicide prevention strategies: a systematic review. *JAMA*, 2005.

doi.org/10.1001/jama.294.16.2064

Zalsman G. Suicide prevention strategies revisited: 10-year systematic review. *Lancet Psychiatry*, 2016. [doi.org/10.1016/S2215-0366\(16\)30030-X](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2215-0366(16)30030-X)

This guide helps you recognise and understand. It is not a diagnosis. For that, see a professional.

 Feeling like it is all too much? **Read the crisis card.** Help is one page away.