



For All of Us

 SUICIDE SAFETY

Staying connected: how ordinary people help prevent suicide

You do not need training or a title to help keep someone alive. This is a warm, plain guide to the everyday connection that protects a life.

Who this is for: anyone who wants to help prevent suicide, no training needed.

Cited: peer-reviewed suicide-prevention research.

Languages: English, Hindi, Marathi, and Kannada.

In crisis now? Call Tele-MANAS on 14416, any time, free.

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✿ WHY YOU MATTER

Connection is prevention

✿ IN SHORT

You do not need training or a title to help keep someone alive. Steady, caring connection from ordinary people, a neighbour, a friend, a cousin, is real protection. If someone may be in danger right now, you can call Tele-MANAS on 14416, any time, free.

Most of us feel helpless around the word suicide. We think this is for doctors, for experts, for someone braver than us. That belief is the very thing that keeps us at arm's length from a person who badly needs us to come closer.

Here is what the research actually shows. Feeling cut off from other people, feeling like a burden, feeling that no one would notice you gone, is one of the strongest things that pushes a person toward wanting to end their life. Which means the opposite is also true. Ordinary, steady connection is not just a nice gesture; it is real protection. A phone call that says "I was thinking of you." A cup of chai shared without an agenda. A message that does not need a reply. These small things are the work.

one of the strongest

drivers of suicidal thinking is
disconnection

Which means your ordinary presence, showing up and staying, is one of the strongest protections there is.



A quiet check-in over chai. No agenda, just presence.

Think of the person in your life who has gone a little quiet lately. The cousin who stopped replying in the group. The friend who used to call and now does not. The colleague who laughs a beat too late. You do not have to fix their life. You only have to reach toward them, gently and without giving up after one try.

This booklet is not about crisis rescue, and it is not about being a first responder. Both of those already exist as their own guides. This is about the everyday, unglamorous prevention that happens long before any crisis: the connection that ordinary people can offer, and that keeps people tethered to life.

● TRY THIS

Think of one person who has been on your mind. Before you finish this booklet, send them a simple message with no ask attached. "Thinking of you. No need to reply." That is prevention, already begun.

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✿ CLEARING THE FEAR

The myth that stops us asking

✿ IN SHORT

Many of us stay silent because we fear that asking about suicide will put the idea in someone's head. The research is clear: it does not. Asking plainly can bring relief and lower the pain.

The single biggest reason ordinary people hold back is a fear that feels like common sense: "If I ask whether they are thinking of ending their life, won't I plant the idea?" It feels responsible to stay quiet. It is not.

A careful review of the research found that asking someone directly whether they are thinking about suicide does not put the thought in their head and does not make them more likely to act. If anything, being asked can bring relief, and the thoughts can settle a little. Asking plainly does not plant the idea; it opens a door the person may have been waiting for someone to open.



The question you are afraid to ask is often the one they have been aching for someone to ask.

So how do you ask? Plainly and warmly, without drama. You do not need clever words. You can say, "Things have felt heavy for you lately. Sometimes when people feel this low, they think about not wanting to be here anymore. Are you having thoughts like that?" Then you stop, and you let them answer.

More, if you want it [^](#)

If they say yes, do not panic and do not rush to fix it. Your only job in that moment is to stay steady and stay with them. You might say, "I'm really glad you told me. You are not alone in this, and we will figure out the next step together." A calm, unshocked face tells them the truth they most need to hear: that they can say this out loud and still be held.

REMEMBER

Talking about suicide openly, with care, is protective, not dangerous. The danger lives in the silence, not in the question. If a conversation frightens you, you can always bring in help: Tele-MANAS on 14416 is there for you as well as for them.

● TRY THIS

Practise the sentence once, out loud, when you are alone. "Are you having thoughts of ending your life?" Saying it once in private makes it far easier to say gently when it matters.

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✿ LEARNING TO SEE

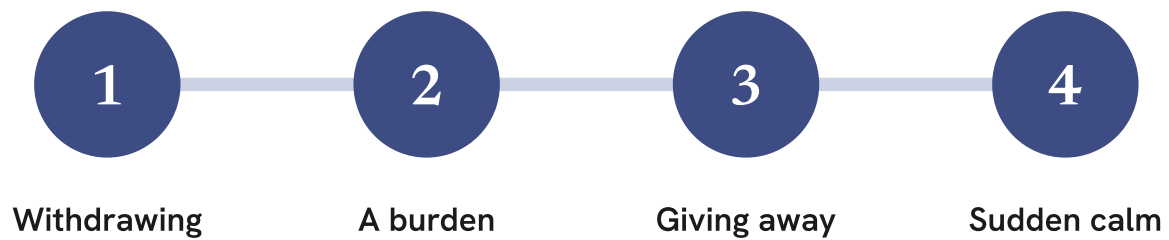
Noticing the quiet signs

✿ IN SHORT

The signs are usually quiet, not dramatic. Withdrawal, giving things away, sudden calm after a low patch, saying they are a burden. When a community learns to notice and gently ask, fewer people go on to attempt suicide.

We imagine warning signs are loud and obvious. Usually they are quiet. A person pulling away from friends and family. Sleeping too much or too little. Saying things like "everyone would be better off without me" or "I'm just a burden." Giving away things they care about. Losing interest in what they once loved. Sometimes an unexpected calm after weeks of darkness, which can mean a decision has been made.

None of these signs is proof, and you are not diagnosing anyone. You are simply noticing, the way a caring person notices. When a whole community learns to spot these quiet signs and gently start a conversation, fewer people go on to attempt suicide.



Quiet signs a caring person can learn to notice. None is proof; each is a reason to reach out.

Pulling away from people, going quiet, cancelling plans.

Saying they are a burden, or that others would be better off.

Giving away belongings, or putting affairs in order.

A sudden, unexplained calm after a long low patch.

In our homes, these signs are easy to miss or explain away. We say he is just tired, she is just moody, log kya kahenge if we make a fuss. The pressure to keep up appearances can quiet the very worry that should make us lean in. Trust the worry. It is usually right to check.

More, if you want it ^

You do not need to be certain to act. If your gut says something is off with someone, that is enough reason to reach out. You are not accusing them of anything by asking. You are telling them, in the clearest way there is, that they matter enough for you to notice and to ask. Even if you are wrong, the cost of a caring question is small. The cost of a missed one can be everything.

● TRY THIS

Bring to mind the people you see often. Is there one who has changed lately, quieter, heavier, more distant? Make a small plan to check on that one person this week. Not a big intervention. A visit, a call, a walk.

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✿ SHOWING UP

Reaching out and staying

✿ IN SHORT

When you reach out, listen more than you speak, resist the urge to fix, and stay. Presence matters more than the perfect words. You do not have to solve their life to help save it.

Once you have reached toward someone, the hardest part for most of us is what to do next. We want to fix it. We offer advice, solutions, silver linings. Usually, none of that is what helps. What helps is that you stay, and that you listen.

Let them talk without rushing to make it better. You do not need answers. "That sounds so heavy. Tell me more." is worth more than any advice. Listen, do not fix, and stay; your steady presence is the help, not your solutions. Avoid "at least" and "just try to." Avoid making it about you. Simply be the person who did not flinch and did not leave.

Listen more than you speak.

Let silences sit. You are not there to fill the air, only to be with them in it.

Do not rush to fix.

Resist advice and bright sides. "I'm here" beats "here's what you should do."

Stay, and come back.

One conversation is a beginning, not an ending. Return tomorrow, and the day after.

Bring in help together.

You are not meant to carry this alone. Offer to sit with them while they call for support.



Reaching out and staying. The presence is the help.

You will not always know what to say, and that is fine. You can say, "I don't have the right words, but I'm not going anywhere." Honesty like that lands better than any script. What a struggling person remembers later is rarely the clever thing someone said. It is that someone stayed.

More, if you want it ^

Staying does not mean carrying it all yourself, and it does not mean being available every hour. It means the person knows you are steady, that you will come back, and that you will help them find more support than you alone can give. Being a bridge to help is not passing them off; it is widening the circle of people holding them.

● TRY THIS

Next time someone shares something heavy, try holding back every fix, tip, and silver lining for the whole conversation. Just listen and stay. Notice how much that alone can carry.

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✿ AFTER THE TALK

After a hard conversation

✿ IN SHORT

Do not disappear afterwards. Follow up in the days that come, gently help put time and distance between them and anything dangerous, and get to help together. No one should be left to cope alone.

A hard conversation is not the finish line. What you do in the days after matters just as much. Send a message the next day. Check in again the day after that.

Following up gently after a hard conversation, and helping someone actually get to care, lowers the chance of further harm.

There is one quiet, practical thing that saves lives. Many suicidal moments pass; if a person can put time and distance between themselves and anything dangerous in those moments, they are far more likely to come through. You can help gently: "While things are this hard, can we keep anything risky out of easy reach for now? I can help." Kept caring and low-key, this is one of the most protective things you can do.

📖 GETTING TO HELP TOGETHER

You are not meant to be the whole answer. Offer to sit beside them while they call Tele-MANAS on 14416, or to go with them to a doctor. "Let's do this together" turns a frightening step into a shared one. Getting help is not handing them off; it is widening the circle that holds them.



No one should have to reach for help alone. Sit beside them, dial together, and stay on the line until someone answers.

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✿ YOUR OWN WEIGHT

Looking after yourself as the helper

✿ IN SHORT

Holding someone else's pain is heavy. Being a helper does not mean carrying it alone or in silence. Look after yourself too, and be careful how you talk about suicide, so your care protects rather than harms.

Walking alongside someone in this much pain takes something out of you. You may feel frightened, drained, or unsure you did enough. That is not weakness; it is the natural weight of caring. You are allowed to feel it, and you are allowed to need support of your own.

Do not carry it in silence. Find one trusted person, or a helpline, to talk to about what you are holding. And be gentle with how you speak about it, to others and to yourself. How we talk about suicide changes its effect: dwell on graphic detail and harm can spread; focus on getting through and finding help, and stories can actually protect people. Keep your focus on hope, connection, and where to get support, never on method or graphic detail.

 IN YOUR CORNER

If you have been the steady one for someone else, hear this clearly: you cannot pour from an empty cup, and needing help yourself is not failing them. Tell one trusted person what you are carrying. Call Tele-MANAS on 14416 for your own sake, not only theirs. Looking after yourself is part of looking after them.

More, if you want it ^

You will not always get it right, and you do not have to. Prevention is not one perfect conversation; it is many ordinary, imperfect moments of showing up. If you reached toward someone and stayed, you did the thing that matters, even on the days it felt clumsy. Let that be enough, and let someone help you carry the rest.

● TRY THIS

Tonight, name one person you could turn to if being someone's support ever felt too heavy. Save their number, or the Tele-MANAS number 14416, somewhere easy to reach. A helper who is held can keep holding others.

WHERE THIS COMES FROM

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FURTHER READING

- WHO: Suicide prevention
- NHS: Help someone else who is having thoughts of suicide

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

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