Supporting Loved Ones

If someone you know is struggling emotionally or having a hard time, you can be the difference in getting them the help they need. It's also incredibly important to take care of yourself when you are supporting someone through a difficult time, as this may stir up difficult emotions.

If you or someone you know is struggling or in crisis, help is available. Call or text 988 or chat 988lifeline.org to reach the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline.

Warning Signs

- Talking about wanting to die or to kill themselves
- Looking for a way to kill themselves, like searching online or buying a gun
- Talking about feeling hopeless or having no reason to live
- Talking about feeling trapped or in unbearable pain
- Talking about being a burden to others
- Increasing the use of alcohol or drugs
- Acting anxious or agitated; behaving recklessly
- Sleeping too little or too much
- Withdrawing or isolating themselves
- Showing rage or talking about seeking revenge
- Extreme mood swings

Support In A Crisis

There are a few ways to approach a suicide-related crisis:

- Talk openly and honestly. Don't be afraid to ask questions like: "Do you have a plan for how you would kill yourself?"
- Remove means such as guns, knives or stockpiled pills
- Calmly ask simple and direct questions, like "Can I help you call 988?"
- Express support and concern
- Don't argue, threaten or raise your voice
- Don't debate whether suicide is right or wrong
- Be patient

Talking To Someone About Getting Help

- Ask open-ended questions like:
    - What would you like to see happen right now?
    - How long have you been feeling this way?
- Be Supportive - if they don't want to talk, let them know you'll be there when they're ready.
- Actively listen by:
    - Acknowledging what they say
    - Responding verbally and asking follow-up questions
    - Maintaining eye contact and staying focused on what they are saying
- Bring it all together
    - Summarize what you discussed and the plan of action
    - Ask if you can follow up with them to check in