



Empowerment Through Education

Providing Life-Saving Strategies and Emotionally Healthy Coping Skills

How to Tell Someone I am Thinking of Suicide



- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 988
- Crisis Text Line 741-741 (US and Canada)
- US Crisis Line for LGBTQ Youth, The Trevor Project, 1-866-488-7386
- US Crisis Text Line for LGBTQ Youth, The Trevor Project, 678-678
- Trans Lifeline 1-877-565-8860

For those of you reading this to help a friend who is thinking of suicide, thank you. Please tell a trusted adult about your friend.

It's hard to know what to say or to whom. You may even think you've been leaving clues that are flashing neon signs and no one is picking up on them. This might make you think people don't care. However, what you may think is obvious just isn't obvious to others. They are missing what you are wanting to say, so here are some pointers and directions on how you can tell someone so it's clear, so you can get the help you deserve and those who love you get to keep you in their life.

Your Fears

Will the person you tell freak out? Will they think of you as weak or selfish? Will they believe you? I won't lie. They might.

That's why you want to choose the right adult. If you tell a friend, ask that friend to go with you to tell a trusted adult. If the person you tell doesn't understand at first, it may be because they can't believe your life would be so bad that you'd want to end it. They don't understand those feelings—how persistent, invasive, scary, convincing, and life-threatening they are. So that's why you must be very direct and bare your soul.

There is fear sharing your thoughts of suicide. But the alternative is that you might die if you don't. And you have sunsets to see, people to fall in love with, and lives to save with your story.

Make the Decision to Tell

You picked this up. You are reading it now. You can do this for yourself or for your friend. I know you have the courage because you have endured and fought these thoughts. You've managed to live through those episodes, and you know how difficult that was. You did that; you can do this. Telling a trusted adult is how you can ask someone to help you save your own life.

Who Should You Tell?

Choose a trusted adult who is compassionate. Ask yourself:

- Is the person you are thinking of telling less likely to judge others?
- Are they a person who listens?
- Are they less likely to lecture or try to fix you?
- Do they refrain from gossip or spreading rumors?

The person you choose could be a teacher, school counselor, parent, aunt, uncle, minister, doctor, coach, therapist, partner, godparent. If you tell a friend who is also a teen, you need to go with that person to tell a trusted adult. If you are a teacher, tell a co-worker or a partner. You can also tell a stranger at a crisis line.

Make a list or mental note of one to three people you would tell. And then commit to telling a person you chose.

How should you tell?

It's hard to know what to say. If you do tell someone, will they think you are joking? That's why you should be very direct. This is just a conversation that comes from your heart.

Don't use phrases like, "I want to hurt myself." You must be clear because the human you are talking to might not take it as seriously. And this is serious. It's life or death.

Say something like:

"I have something very important to tell you. This is not a joke. Can you listen? I have been thinking of killing myself and I need help. When I have these thoughts, I feel like I don't have control. I don't understand these feelings of suicide and they scare me."

- Add your own personal struggles. Be open and heartfelt.
- You can tell someone in person. You can tell someone in a message, on a phone call, or write it in a note and hand it to that person while you are there.

How will the person you tell react?

The person you choose to tell may say something like, "You have so much to live for!" Or "You shouldn't feel that way." It's not the right thing to say but be patient with them. It's a reactionary statement and at first, they may be in denial.

Right at first the person you tell will probably feel scared because this is so serious. But once they absorb the news, most people feel honored that someone trusted them with such personal information. And they feel thankful they could help you. (If they aren't helpful, or make disparaging remarks, move on to the next person you thought to tell.)

You can call a local crisis line together. You can go tell someone together. You can ask someone to tell another trusted adult on your behalf. **However, do it, and don't give up.**

Asking for help is a sign of courage. One day in the future, your story could be another person's survival guide.