

SUICIDE



When you are talking to someone that you believe may be suicidal – what should you do? Here is a list things to do until you can get them professional help.

- Introduce yourself and let the person know you want to help.
- Be careful. A suicidal person is sometimes a threat to others.
- Take all suicidal threats seriously.
- Your main objective is to get the person referred to professional care.
- Contain the person. Do not let them wander about.
- Focus on the main problem, not past personal histories.
- Take it easy. Gain trust.
- Try to find out what has just happened that caused them to think of ending their life.
- Do not be afraid to talk directly to the person or to mention suicide openly.
- Listen for anger, depression or uncertainty.
- Acknowledge the person's feelings.
- Keep interruptions to a minimum.
- One person only should do most of the talking to the suicidal person.
- Offer food and nonalcoholic beverages.
- Never lie, argue with a person's feelings, or moralize or judge the person.
- Do not try to make someone feel guilty.
- Develop a specific plan and get the person's agreement to the plan.
- Suicidal people need to be referred for professional evaluation.

Taken from the *Quick Series Guide to Crisis Intervention for Emergency Personnel* developed in collaboration with the International Critical Incident Stress Foundation (ICISF).

These guidelines have been developed only to provide temporary support to normal people during an urgent situation. They are not a substitute for proper crisis intervention training. They are also not a form of psychotherapy or a substitute for psychotherapy.