



MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID USA

FIRST EDITION (REVISED) | ADULT



**MENTAL
HEALTH
FIRST AID®**

Mental Health First Aid is the help offered to a person developing a mental health problem or experiencing a mental health crisis. The first aid is given until appropriate treatment and support are received or until the crisis resolves.



Suicide Risk Assessment

- Gender
- Age
- Chronic physical illness
- Mental illness
- Use of alcohol or other substances
- Less social support
- Previous attempt
- Organized plan



Warning Signs of Suicide



- Threatening to hurt or kill oneself
- Seeking access to means
- Talking, writing, or posting on social media about death, dying, or suicide
- Feeling hopeless
- Feeling worthless or a lack of purpose
- Acting recklessly or engaging in risky activities
- Feeling trapped
- Increasing alcohol or drug use
- Withdrawing from family, friends, or society
- Demonstrating rage and anger or seeking revenge
- Appearing agitated
- Having a dramatic change in mood

Questions to Ask

Ask directly whether the person is suicidal:

- "Are you having thoughts of suicide?"
- "Are you thinking about killing yourself?"

If "yes " to either above, then...

Ask whether the person has a plan:

- "Have you decided how you are going to kill yourself?"
- "Have you decided when you would do it?"
- "Have you collected the things you need to carry out your plan?"

How to Talk with a Person Who Is Suicidal



- Let the person know you are concerned and willing to help
- Discuss your observations with the person
- Ask the question(s) without dread
- Do not express a negative judgment
- Appear confident, as this can be reassuring

Check For Two Other Risks:

- Has the person been using alcohol or other drugs?
- Has he or she made a suicide attempt in the past?

Keeping the Person Safe



- Provide a safety contact number
- Help the person identify past supports
- Involve them in decision making
- Call law enforcement immediately if the person has a weapon or is behaving aggressively

Do Not

- Leave an actively suicidal person alone
- Use guilt and threats to try to prevent suicide
 - *"You will go to hell"*
 - *"You will ruin other people's lives if you die by suicide"*
- Agree to keep their plan a secret