How to Help Your Friend
(Suicide Prevention Protocol)

If your friend shared that they are having some thought about suicide, follow these paths:

**Get more information by asking questions like:**
- How long have you felt like this?
- What have you thought about?
- What would you do?

**Provide support for your friend:**
**DO**
- a. Listen to your friend’s thoughts and emotions, it can provide relief
- b. Encourage your friend to do activities that help them to feel better
- c. Remind your friend to use the resources available to them

**DON’T**
- a. Promise to keep your friend’s thoughts a secret
- b. Try to treat an issue like depression by yourself

**Help your friend get professional care:**
- a. Offer to go with your friend to talk to a trusted adult
- b. Ask your friend to write a note that you can give to a trusted adult
- c. Talk to a trusted adult on your own

**If it is an emergency:**
- a. Tell a school counselor, your parents and/or your friend’s parents
- b. Talk to your friend about going to the hospital emergency room
- c. Call the police and ask them to check on your friend

**Get help for yourself:**
- a. Talk to a trusted adult about how you are feeling through this process
- b. Call a telephone crisis line to get ideas/options

**Talking Tips:**
- a. Invite your friend to talk about their feelings without judgment
- b. Listen, allow your friend to talk the majority of the conversation
- c. Avoid commenting on the way they tell their story or act
- d. Avoid unkind words which express blame or shame
- e. Communicate caring, acceptance of your friend’s feelings (it does not mean that you feel the same way, but that you understand the way that your friend might feel)
- f. Talk about your hope for things getting better in the future
- g. Try to tolerate silence and simply sit with your friend
- h. While it is good to help your friend with some problem solving, try to avoid sharing “quick fixes” for the challenges your friend is going through