

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

- Listen to your friend's thoughts and emotions, it can provide relief
- Encourage your friend to do activities that help them to feel better
- Remind your friend to use the resources available to them

DON'T

- Promise to keep your friend's thoughts a secret
- Try to treat an issue like depression by yourself

Help your friend get professional care:

- Offer to go with your friend to talk to a trusted adult
- Ask your friend to write a note that you can give to a trusted adult
- Talk to a trusted adult on your own

If it is an emergency:

- Tell a school counselor, your parents and/or your friend's parents
- Talk to your friend about going to the hospital emergency room
- Call the police and ask them to check on your friend

Get help for yourself:

- Talk to a trusted adult about how you are feeling through this process
- Call a telephone crisis line to get ideas/options

Talking Tips:

- Invite your friend to talk about their feelings without judgment
- Listen, allow your friend to talk the majority of the conversation
- Avoid commenting on the way they tell their story or act
- Avoid unkind words which express blame or shame
- 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)
- Talk about your hope for things getting better in the future
- Try to tolerate silence and simply sit with your friend
- 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