How to Help Your Friend
(Suicide Prevention Protocol)

This resource was created to help students know how to help a friend that said they were thinking about suicide. In fact when asked, most students (90%) shared they wanted a plan to help a friend if they had thoughts about suicide. It is impossible to know if someone will act on these thoughts and so it is important to take action if a friend says something like, “I wish I could go to sleep and not wake up.”

Fact: In almost 70% of all suicides the person told someone their intentions at least ONE hour before. - The Jason Foundation

Things to Consider

1. Do I feel comfortable talking to my friend about this? Does anyone else know my friend feels this way?
   YES If you do feel comfortable talking with your friend about this you might:
   a. Get more information by asking questions like: How long have you felt like this? What would you do?
   NO If you do not feel comfortable talking with your friend about this you might:
   a. Tell an adult you trust so they can help your friend.

   Fact: Up to 86% of parents whose child completed suicide did not know their child was depressed or suicidal. - Suicide Among the Young, Rosston, K.

2. What does my friend want and need? Does my friend know about the resources available?
   WANT Many times a friend will want:
   a. To talk, feel understood and supported
   NEED Many times a friend will need:
   a. To receive care from a professional

   Fact: About 90% of those who complete suicide suffer from at least one major psychiatric disorder. - Suicide in Montana, Rosston, K.

Know Your Options

1. What resources are available to help my friend?
   SUPPORTS Some resources are easy to get:
   a. Support from friends, school staff and family can be very meaningful (Talking Tips Below)
   b. Telephone crisis lines available 24 hours
   PROFESSIONAL CARE Getting professional help requires help from a trusted adult (parent, other family member, teacher, coach, minister, school psychologist, school counselor, secretary, principal):
   a. Private professional counselor
   b. Mental health center
   c. Hospital or doctor

   Fact: Research shows that professional care can be very effective. About 86% of teens respond positively to treatment for depression with a combination of antidepressants and counseling. - Treatment for Adolescents with Depression Study Team
**Problem Solving**

1. What if my friend refuses to talk to an adult?

**PERSUADE**

Help your friend find a solution they can feel better about:

- 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

**ACT SOLO**

While it might stress the friendship, it is better to help your friend get help through such a painful part of their life:

- Talk to your parents or a telephone crisis staff member about your options
- Talk to a trusted adult at school
- Write a letter to a trusted adult at school

**Fact:** Common symptoms of depression include limited problem solving, difficulty concentrating and low motivation to take action.

- Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (5)

1. What if an adult is told and they do not take any action?

**FOLLOW UP**

Meet with the adult a second time to express your concern:

- Ask the trusted adult what they think needs to be done now

**MOVE ON**

Not all adults know how to respond to this kind of a problem:

- Help your friend find and talk to another trusted adult

**Fact:** Short term improvement for a friend following a suicidal crisis does not mean that the suicide risk is over. Most suicides occur within 3 months following the beginning of "improvement" when the teen has the energy to put their morbid thoughts and feelings into effect.

- Suicide in Montana, Rosston, K.

1. What if a friend posts a message about suicide on social media on the weekend (Facebook, Twitter, etc.)?

**SUPPORT**

Support is great, but it is not always enough help in a situation like this:

- Support from friends, school staff and family can be very meaningful (Talking Tips Below)
- Remind your friend about the telephone crisis line available 24 hours

**RESPONSE**

Help for situations like this cannot always wait:

- Print or copy the message and tell your parents
- Print of copy the message and tell your friend’s parents
- Call the telephone crisis line to ask for advice
- Talk to your friend about going to the emergency room in a hospital to get help
- Call the police and ask them to check on your friend

**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
## Resources in My Community

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<td>Your School</td>
<td>School Counselor/Principal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Riverfront Mental Health Center</td>
<td>Hamilton</td>
<td>406-532-9101</td>
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<tr>
<td>Full Circle Counseling Solutions</td>
<td>Stevensville</td>
<td>406-532-1615</td>
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<td><strong>Hospitals</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Providence Center/St. Patrick</td>
<td>Missoula</td>
<td>406-327-3034</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>Missoula</td>
<td>406-728-4100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marcus Daly</td>
<td>Hamilton</td>
<td>406-375-4800</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Police</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Darby Police Department</td>
<td>Darby</td>
<td>406-821-3244 or 911</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hamilton Police Dept.</td>
<td>Hamilton</td>
<td>406-363-2100 or 911</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ravalli County Sheriff</td>
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<td>406-363-3033 or 911</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stevensville Police Department</td>
<td>Stevensville</td>
<td>406-777-3011 or 911</td>
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## 24 Hour Crisis Telephone Lines

- **Montana Suicide Prevention Lifeline** 24 Hours 1-800-273-8255
- **West House Crisis Center** 24 Hours 1-406-532-8990
- **Trevor Lifeline (for LGBTQ)** 24 Hours 1-866-488-7386

## Private Professional Counselors

- **Mahr, Sylvia LCSW** Corvallis/Hamilton 406-370-8341
- **Beck, Coral LCSW** Florence 406-241-1809
- **Sisson, Aleta MA, LCPC** Florence 406-363-3353
- **Ruggiero, Debra PhD, LCPC** Stevensville 406-777-3800
- **Murphy, Marilyn LCPC** Stevensville 406-777-9836
- **Heckeroth, Shawna LCSW, LAC** Hamilton 406-531-5670
- **Olmsted, Brenda LCSW** Hamilton 406-375-7522
- **Bishop, Nilda LCPC** Hamilton 406-363-5386
- **Knell, Jennifer RN, LCPC** Hamilton 406-360-8006
- **Randazzo, Jessica LCSW** Hamilton 406-370-3483
- **Laugel, Becky LCPC** Hamilton 406-381-6611
- **Coleman, Tyler LCPC, LAC** Hamilton 406-396-5910
- **Lucas, Barb MA, LCPC** Hamilton 406-363-4463
- **Collins, Melissa LCPC, LAC** Hamilton 406-531-7164
- **Telfer, Julie LCSW** Hamilton 406-381-2300
- **Done, Beth MS, LAC** Hamilton 406-375-1717
- **Mann, Rebecca LCSW** Hamilton 406-880-2352
- **Van Marle, Robert LCSW, PC** Hamilton 406-363-6900
- **Erickson, Tonya LCPC** Hamilton 406-369-5268
- **Widmer, Thad LCSW** Hamilton 406-531-8846
- **Winters, Hank PhD, LCPC** Hamilton 406-363-3882