



# Five steps for suicide prevention

Spread the word about suicide prevention and make an impact in someone's life. If you think someone might be considering suicide, be the one to help by following these five steps.

## 1 ASK

Asking the question "Are you thinking about suicide?" communicates that you're open to speaking about suicide in a non-judgmental and supportive way. Asking in this direct, unbiased manner, can open the door for effective dialogue about their emotional pain and can allow everyone involved to see what next steps need to be taken. Other questions you can ask include, "How do you hurt?" and "How can I help?" Do not ever promise to keep their thoughts of suicide a secret.

## 2 KEEP THEM SAFE

If you've determined in the "Ask" step that suicide is indeed a concern, it's important to ask additional questions to establish immediate safety. Have they already done anything to try to kill themselves before talking with you? Does the person experiencing thoughts of suicide know how they would kill themselves? Do they have a specific detailed plan? What's the timing for their plan? Knowing the answers to each of these questions can tell us a lot about the imminence and severity of danger the person is in.

## 3 BE THERE

Being there for someone with thoughts of suicide can be life-saving. This could mean being physically present for someone, speaking with them on the phone when you can, or any other way that shows support for the person at risk. An important aspect of this step is to make sure you follow through with the ways in which you say you'll be able to support the person—do not commit to anything you are not willing or able to accomplish. If you are unable to be physically present with someone who has thoughts of suicide, talk with them to develop ideas about others who might be able to help as well.

## 4 HELP THEM CONNECT

Helping someone with thoughts of suicide connect with immediate support (like the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline, call or text 988 or chat 988Lifeline.org) during a crisis situation is the first step in establishing a safety net. Additional components of a safety net might be connecting them with supports and resources in their communities. Explore some of these possible supports with them—are they currently seeing a mental health professional? Have they in the past? Is this an option for them currently? Are there mental health resources in the community that can help?

## 5 FOLLOW UP

After your initial contact with a person experiencing thoughts of suicide, and after you've connected them with the immediate support systems they need, make sure to follow-up with them to see how they're doing. Leave a message, send a text, or give them a call. The follow-up step is a great time to check in with them to see if there is more you are capable of helping with.

*For more information and helpful resources, visit [MagellanHealthcare.com/Prevent-Suicide](https://MagellanHealthcare.com/Prevent-Suicide).*

*If you are or someone you know is experiencing a mental health, substance use or suicidal crisis, please call or text 988 or chat 988Lifeline.org to be connected with crisis counselors at the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline.*