

UNDERSTANDING SUICIDE PREVENTION: WARNING SIGNS AND RISK FACTORS

Suicide prevention begins with paying attention to changes, taking concerns seriously, and helping people connect with support. There is no single sign that can predict suicide, and people may show distress in different ways. A combination of warning signs, major stressors, and changes from someone's usual behavior deserves attention.

What to notice:

- Talking about wanting to die, feeling hopeless, trapped, or like a burden.
- Withdrawing from friends, family, school, work, or activities they usually value.
- Marked changes in mood, sleep, substance use, agitation, recklessness, or self-care.
- Giving away meaningful belongings, saying unexpected goodbyes, or putting affairs in order.
- Experiencing a major loss, relationship crisis, financial strain, bullying, trauma, serious illness, or another overwhelming change.



Keep in mind: Risk factors are not destiny. Supportive relationships, access to care, problem-solving skills, a sense of purpose, and feeling connected to family, friends, school, work, culture, or community can all be protective.

What to do:

If something feels different, check in. Name what you have noticed, ask how the person is doing, and listen. If you are worried about suicide, ask directly.

When concern is urgent, stay with the person when possible and help connect them with professional or crisis support.