

Suicide prevention at Tahoe: Supporting someone who is suicidal

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Suicide Prevention



Listening is one of the best things you can do when supporting someone who's suicidal.

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SUICIDE RESOURCES

Nevada County Crisis Line: 530-265-5811

Washoe County Crisis Line: 775-784-8090

Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 530-885-2300

ACCESS TO MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES:

Placer County, Adult: 530-581-4054

Placer County, Children: 1-866-293-1940

Washoe County, Children: 775-325-7902

Nevada County: Adult and Children 530-582-7803

More online: Find a directory of local therapy services at <http://www.tfhd.com>, under Quick Links.

TRUCKEE, Calif. — When we come in contact with someone who is feeling depressed or suicidal, our first response is to offer help, offer advice, find solutions and share our own experiences.

But people who feel suicidal aren't seeking answers and solutions. They need a safe place to express their feelings. They need someone who will take the time to really listen, who won't judge, give advice or offer opinions, and who will respect them.

The best action we can take is to be quiet and listen, really listen. We need to control the urge to comment, share a story and offer advice.

We need to listen to what this person is telling us and to understand the feelings behind the story from the other person's perspective. We want to give them relief from being alone in their pain.

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SUICIDE IS A CRY FOR HELP

A suicidal person is ambivalent and struggling with the part of themselves that wants to live and stop hurting — not necessarily wanting to die.

When a person confides in you they are having thoughts of suicide they believe you are someone they can trust to share their anxiety and fears.

ASK: ARE YOU HAVING THOUGHTS ABOUT ENDING YOUR LIFE?

If you ask this question to a person who is contemplating suicide you are doing a good thing by showing them you care about them, you take them seriously and are allowing them to share their pain with you.

You are creating an opportunity for them to speak about pent up or painful feelings. You may be afraid to talk openly about suicidal thoughts and feelings but it may save a life.

If this person is having thoughts of suicide, find out how far the suicide ideation has developed. The more planning someone has put into a suicide, the greater the risk.

NO SECRETS

Part of the suicidal person is afraid of more pain and may ask you to not tell anyone. Conversely, part of the person wants to stay alive and is reaching out for help.

Respond to that part of the person that is reaching out and seek a mature and compassionate person with whom you can evaluate the situation. Do not try and hold this information alone.

Under no circumstance can you keep a secret that may cause someone's death. Getting help for this person and yourself is an expression of love and deeply caring and the right choice in this serious situation.

If the person is acutely suicidal, do not leave them alone. You can help facilitate seeking medical attention right away, contact Lifeline directly at 1-800-273-TALK (8255) or local law enforcement. When in doubt about what to do, be safe and call for help.

MOVING AWAY FROM CRISIS

Many people have suicidal thoughts at some time in their life, however there is hope in moving away from crisis toward recovery.

Most suicidal people suffer from situations that will pass with time or assistance from recovery programs or professional help. Suicidal feelings can come and go, therefore follow up and continued support is important.

The Tahoe Truckee Suicide Prevention Coalition provides free suicide prevention training of "Know the Signs" to individual groups or businesses.

For more information about the Tahoe Truckee Suicide Prevention Coalition visit <http://www.tahoelifeline.org> .

Lisa Stekert is the coordinator for the Tahoe Truckee Suicide Prevention Coalition and Outreach Coordinator for the Tahoe Truckee Prevention Task Force. Contact her at lstekert@tfhd.com  or by calling 530-550-6733.

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