

How to Ask About Suicide



Take a deep breath

It's okay to be scared or anxious about asking the question. Suicide is not something most of us are used to talking about. Get comfortable being uncomfortable, and take a deep breath to ground yourself.

Know your resources

Be familiar with the support resources available, like school counselors, a community mental health agency, the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, or the Trevor Lifeline.

Create a safe space

Find a place that is private and comfortable. Think of how this person likes to talk. Do they prefer sitting face-to-face? Or talking while walking? Take a moment to silence your cell phone and close the door.

Start with "I've noticed..."

State the reasons you're concerned about them, like changes in mood, recent life events, or concerning behaviors. Remind them that you care.

Ask open ended-questions

To get the conversation going, ask open-ended questions like, "I'd like to understand more about what you're going through. Can you tell me more?"

Ask the question

Use direct language. Ask if they have been thinking about suicide or ending their life. Using the word suicide sends the message, "We can talk about this here." Avoid using terms like "hurting yourself", which is different from suicide.

Listen without judgement

Avoid problem-solving and advice-giving. Instead, show them that they are being heard. Nod, say "uh huh", and ask questions.

Connect with resources and follow up

Connect them with the resources you've gathered. Offer to call or connect to these resources with them. Finally, make a plan to follow up and ask how they are doing in the near future.



We Need You Here.

