



Recognizing Warning Signs of Suicide

Not everyone who thinks about suicide will show warning signs beforehand.

Someone who is thinking about suicide might give some clues to those around them that show they are troubled. An important part of suicide prevention is recognizing these warning signs and treating them seriously.

The following is a list of warning signs, things people might do or say when they are feeling distraught and overwhelmed, in order to communicate their distress to others. It is likely that a suicidal person will display a combination of these signs rather than one single sign.

Displaying one or even a few of these signs does not necessarily mean that a person is suicidal. When concerning behaviors are noticed and they represent a marked change from what is typical for that person, it is worth checking and reaching out to offer support.

Suicide Warning Signs

Feelings:

- **Hopelessness**
- Sadness
- Anger
- Shame
- Guilt
- Worthlessness
- Helplessness
- Powerlessness
- Disconnection
- Loneliness
- Isolation
- Irritability
- Emptiness
- Vengefulness
- Desperation
- Fear of Losing Control

Actions:

- Alcohol or drug misuse
- Seeking out things that can be used for suicide (such as weapons or pills)
- Self-harming
- Prior suicide attempts
- Saying goodbye as if not expecting to be seen again
- Preoccupation with death and dying
- Taking steps to put affairs in order
- Giving away possessions, especially if those possessions have sentimental value
- Taking unnecessary risks or acting as if having a “death wish”
- Fighting or seeking out reasons to end relationships
- Breaking laws

Changes:

- Withdrawal from family and friends.
- Quitting activities that were previously important or enjoyable
- Major changes in sleep patterns (sleeping too much or too little, nightmares)
- Loss of energy or motivation
- Deterioration in personal hygiene and grooming
- Sudden or extreme change in eating habits or weight
- Sudden, unexplained sense of calm (especially if it comes after a period of emotional distress)

Threats:

- **Talking about, writing about, or making plans for suicide**
- “I wish I were dead.”
- “What’s the point? Things are never going to get better.”
- “Everyone would be better off if I wasn’t around anymore”
- “I can’t take this anymore.”
- “Nothing I do makes any difference.”
- “I’m damaged . . . I’ll never be the same again.”
- “I’m so alone . . . No one cares about me.”
- “I won’t be around to bother you anymore.”

Situations:

- Death of a loved one
- Diagnosis of debilitating or fatal illness
- Loss of a defining role (loss of job, loss of custody, change in perception of self)
- Changes that are unwanted, frightening, or for which you feel unprepared
- **Belief that there is no other way to stop hurting**
- Loss of a relationship
- Humiliation