



Talking to Students About Suicide

Tend to your own feelings first. Pause to reflect on and support your own emotions so you can speak calmly and thoughtfully to the student.

Choose words carefully. Avoid phrases that reflect suicide in an affirming way ("She's no longer suffering") or shaming language ("Commit suicide" vs. "Die by suicide").

Validate feelings. Help the student name and acknowledge their emotions. Explain that each person's feelings are different, it's okay to experience a range of emotions.

Avoid rumors. Don't speculate about the reasons for suicide. Instead, emphasize that people who consider suicide are navigating many thoughts, feelings, and situations.

Tailor your support. People use different ways to express their emotions and cope. Connect with your student regularly so they don't feel alone and find healthy ways of expressing their thoughts and feelings.

Outline a Plan. Prepare to share with your student what you would want them to know or do if/when they hear about suicide or have thoughts of suicide.

Extend the conversation. Ask students to think about ways they can support one another within their peer groups. Help them to identify adults they can trust and other resources to support them with grief or their own suicidal thoughts.



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