

# **SOMEONE I KNOW MAY BE AT RISK TO SUICIDE CHECKLIST**

While no one can predict when or if someone they know will die by suicide, there are some common indicators that they may be struggling and in need of help and support. When someone is at risk of suicide, you might notice changes in their personality, attitude, or behavior. It is important to know that help and treatment for people at risk of suicide are widely available.

If your friend or loved one has a plan to harm themselves and/or intent to act on a plan, get help immediately.

For strengthening mental, emotional and relational health, download the free + anonymous Be Strong App. If you stay ready, you don't have to get ready, and when those tough moments happen, be courageous enough to take action. People in crisis need a friend who knows how and where to get help, and you can be that bridge with the Be Strong App.

## **COMMON SIGNS OF SUICIDAL THOUGHTS AND BEHAVIORS:**

- Talking about wanting to end it all; in person, via text or on social media
- Expressing guilt (e.g., "I'm a worthless person") or hopelessness (e.g., "What's the point, things will never get better")
- Withdrawal from everyday life (e.g., no longer spending time with friends or engaging in previously enjoyable hobbies and passions)
- Asking about or actively seeking access to means to self-harm (e.g., weapons, pills, etc.)
- Giving away personal possessions
- Changes in use of substances (alcohol and/or drug use)

### **Additional signs may include:**

- Change in eating and/or sleeping habits
- Violent or unusually rebellious behavior, running away
- Neglecting their appearance, change in their usual grooming habits
- Persistent boredom
- Change in physical health: persistent complaints about ailments such as headaches or stomach aches
- Not tolerating praise or reward

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If you notice someone you care about exhibiting any of the common signs or significant changes listed above, there are things you can do to help. Trust your gut. It is best to express your concerns directly, not as an expert, but as a friend. Ask them specifically about self-harm and suicide. Help them to get support and help as soon as possible. Express your concern and ask questions.

It is important to remember that you can't put the idea of suicide into someone's head or cause them to want to harm themselves just because you ask - it is always best to be direct. Asking directly about thoughts of suicide can help in the following ways:

- It may be a relief to know they are not alone and that you care enough to bring it up.
- It may be comforting that you aren't afraid to help them face their problems with boldness and love.
- It will help you figure out how urgent it is for them to get help.

If they say they have a specific plan and intend to act on it, get help immediately.

## Listen and be there for them:

Suicidal thoughts are a frightening experience for a person struggling with them, and for their friends and loved ones. If you don't know what to say, it can be just as helpful to stay with them, listen quietly, and offer comfort through your presence. If they are unable to open up and talk or write about their challenges, avoid judgement or jumping to conclusions. Know that you shouldn't have the answers, and you do not need to be an expert - you need to be a friend.

## Don't let it go:

Stay in touch, stay connected and keep the lines of communication open. Suicidal thoughts and feelings are a sign of deep pain, serious problems, and indicate a loss of ability to cope with things in more self-preserving ways. It is common to feel overwhelmed when you are worried about someone at risk of suicide. Ask someone you trust to help by keeping in touch with your friend who is at risk.

## Make a Stanley - Brown Safety Plan:

The Stanley- Brown Safety Plan (template below)

# STANLEY - BROWN SAFETY PLAN

## STEP 1: WARNING SIGNS:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

## STEP 2: INTERNAL COPING STRATEGIES – THINGS I CAN DO TO TAKE MY MIND OFF MY PROBLEMS WITHOUT CONTACTING ANOTHER PERSON:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

## STEP 3: PEOPLE AND SOCIAL SETTINGS THAT PROVIDE DISTRACTION:

- |                 |                 |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1. Name: _____  | Contact: _____  |
| 2. Name: _____  | Contact: _____  |
| 3. Place: _____ | 4. Place: _____ |

## STEP 4: PEOPLE WHOM I CAN ASK FOR HELP DURING A CRISIS:

- |                |                |
|----------------|----------------|
| 1. Name: _____ | Contact: _____ |
| 2. Name: _____ | Contact: _____ |
| 3. Name: _____ | Contact: _____ |

## STEP 5: PROFESSIONALS OR AGENCIES I CAN CONTACT DURING A CRISIS:

- |   |              |
|---|--------------|
| 1. Clinician/Agency Name: _____                             | Phone: _____ |
| Emergency Contact : _____                                   |              |
| 2. Clinician/Agency Name: _____                             | Phone: _____ |
| Emergency Contact : _____                                   |              |
| 3. Local Emergency Department: _____                        |              |
| Emergency Department Address: _____                         |              |
| Emergency Department Phone : _____                          |              |
| 4. Suicide Prevention Lifeline Phone: 1-800-273-TALK (8255) |              |

## STEP 6: MAKING THE ENVIRONMENT SAFER (PLAN FOR LETHAL MEANS SAFETY):

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_

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## Get support and guidance for yourself:

It's best to openly discuss your concerns and observations with a trusted adult or mental health professional, to talk about the things that worry you about your friend or loved one. It's always appropriate to discuss your concerns about a person at risk of suicide – the benefit of keeping your friend safe outweighs the loss of confidentiality or friendship.

## Don't let it go:

Convey your belief that long term care can help. Assure them that these feelings CAN get better with help. Ask them to download the Be Strong App on their device.

# GET HELP NOW

Getting help is the greatest sign of strength!

If you or someone you know needs help immediately, take one or more of the following actions:

- Stay with them while you assist them in getting help.
- Open the Be Strong App, go to the immediate help section and send a text to the crisis counselor about what is happening.
- If you do not have the Be Strong App, move to the next step.
- Text START to 741-741 (immediately connected to a crisis counselor)
- Call 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
- Bring your friend or loved one to the nearest hospital emergency room.
- If someone is agitated or potentially violent, avoid putting yourself in a personally dangerous situation – call rather than bringing someone to the hospital yourself.
- Call 911
- Contact your campus counselor or other mental health professional.

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