



How to start a conversation with someone you are concerned about

Not everyone who is contemplating suicide lets their friends or family know how they are feeling. Signs to look out for can include:

- Complaining of feeling hopeless
- Talking about feeling trapped
- Self-harming
- Misusing drugs or alcohol more than usual
- Making a will.

This is not a definitive list. And sometimes people might show these signs for other reasons. There's no easy way to ask someone if they intend to kill themselves. But it won't make it more likely. The best approach is to be sensitive and gentle. And it is also important to ask clear and direct questions as:

- Are you thinking about hurting yourself?
- Are you thinking about dying?
- Are you thinking about suicide?

Try to avoid questions such as:

- You're not thinking of doing anything silly, are you?

Try to give them the opportunity to talk honestly and openly. This is helped by asking open-ended questions such as "Where did that happen?" and "How did that feel?"

Try to avoid statements such as "I know how you feel" and "Try not to worry about it".

Getting professional help

Although talking to someone about their feelings is can be very useful in helping them feel safe and secure at the time, these feelings might not last. Some people may need long-term support to help them overcome their suicidal thoughts.

This will most likely be easier with professional help, for example, through sharing concerns with a GP. Not only can a professional deal with the underlying issues behind someone's suicidal thoughts, they can also offer advice and support for you.

If there is an immediate danger, make sure they are not left on their own.