

Suicide Warning Signs

DO

- use “I” language in talking about feelings.
“I feel worried that you quit the soccer team.”
- start with specific signs you have noticed.
“I heard you moving around the house last night. Are you having trouble sleeping lately?”
- ask directly if your child is thinking about suicide or self-harm.
“Have you been having thoughts of suicide?”

Source: American Foundation for Suicide Prevention <https://afsp.org/>

DON'T

- dismiss how they're feeling as routine or as something that will get better on its own. Instead, reassure them that you support them and will help them find help.
- ask questions that will only give you a yes/no answer. Instead, ask open-ended questions such as, *“When do you notice that your thoughts are the most intense?”*
- promise confidentiality. Instead, say, “It’s really important that you be honest with me about what you’re feeling. I may need to tell someone else who can help you, so you don’t have to feel this way anymore.”

Getting Help for Your Child

You can reach out to a professional, like a licensed mental health counselor, a guidance counselor at your child’s school or your child’s pediatrician.

Free Resources

988 available 24 hours/day

- Call or text (988)
- National Suicide and Crisis Lifeline offering mental health crisis support.

NAMI HelpLine

Mon-Fri, 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. ET

Call: 1-800-950-NAMI (6264)

Text: “HelpLine” to 62640

Chat: nami.org/help

Email: helpline@nami.org

Nationwide peer-support service offering information, resources, and referrals to local support networks.

If You Believe Your Child Is Considering Suicide

- **Do not leave them alone.**
Remove harmful objects. Give them space and do not make them feel trapped.
- **Listen, express concern, and reassure.**
Focus on being understanding, caring and nonjudgmental.
- **Guide them to professional help.**
If they already have a therapist or other health care professional, call them. If not, research possible resources.
- **Ask questions to get more information.**
 - Are you having thoughts of suicide?
 - Do you have a plan?
 - Would you be willing to talk to someone?

Resources for starting a conversation

<https://nami.org/Your-Journey/Kids-Teens-and-Young-Adults/Kids/How-to-Talk-to-Your-Child-About-Their-Mental-Health>

