

# If Someone Near You Is Having Suicidal Thoughts

*A gatekeeper's quick guide — guidance and advice*

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## First — 3 truths that take away the fear

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- 1. Talking about suicide directly is safe.** A direct, respectful question doesn't "plant the idea" or push someone toward it. On the contrary — it reduces stigma, brings relief, and opens the door to help.
- 2. You are not responsible for someone else's life,** but your stepping in can save it. Your role is to notice, to talk, and to connect the person with help.
- 3. Take every warning sign seriously.** Better an "unnecessary" worry than a missed signal. An awkward question won't ruin the relationship — what matters most is the person's life.

## The 6 steps of a gatekeeper conversation

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**ASK.** Say what you've noticed and that you're worried. Ask direct questions (below).

**LISTEN.** Without judging, without arguing. Hear both the reasons for the pain and the reasons to live. Don't rush to give advice.

**KEEP THEM SAFE.** Instead of a suicide plan — make a safety plan together (below).

**BE THERE.** Show that you're ready to be present; instill hope ("this state is temporary"). Don't promise what you won't do.

**REFER.** Help the person connect with support — a hotline, a psychologist, loved ones.

**FOLLOW UP.** Later, text or call. Keep your promises — it sustains trust.

## How to ask directly and respectfully?

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"I've been worried about you lately..." → "What's hardest for you right now?" → "Do you ever feel like you don't want to live?" → **"Do you have thoughts of suicide?"**

### Risk assessment — 4 questions:

1) **Thoughts.** Are there thoughts of suicide? 2) **Plan.** Is there a plan — how exactly / when? 3) **Means.** Is there access to means? 4) **Attempts.** Have there been attempts before?

*The more detailed the plan and the closer the access to means, the higher the risk. Don't promise to keep thoughts of suicide a secret.*

## Safety plan

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Talk through and write down together: when the thoughts appear (times, situations) • what eases their intensity (people, places, activities, sources of meaning) • get a promise to remove dangerous means from reach (medications, dangerous objects) • who to turn to: loved ones + a hotline.

## What NOT to do

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Don't argue, don't lecture, don't minimize ("others have it worse"). Don't rush to "fix" things or give advice instead of listening. Don't leave the person alone in an acute situation. Don't promise full confidentiality when life is at risk.

## When to act urgently

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There's a concrete plan + access to means and serious intent, a recent attempt, or you're not sure it's safe:

**Ambulance — 103 • Police — 102**

*Don't leave the person alone; if needed, accompany them to a place of help or stay with them until help arrives.*

## Where to refer (not an acute threat)

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**People in Need — 0 800 210 160** (24/7, anonymous). **For teens:** La Strada line 116 111, Teenergizer (teenergizer.org/consultations). The full list of contacts is in the "Support Resources" section.

*Note: Lifeline Ukraine (7333) is the dedicated suicide-prevention hotline, but its operation is temporarily paused (as of 26 June 2026) — check lifelineukraine.com, as it may resume.*

## Take care of yourself too

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Set your own limits: how much support you can give. Don't let "both drown" — ask for support yourself and use supervision. Solving all of the person's problems is not your responsibility. By taking care of yourself, you take better care of others.