

# 5

# Action Steps for Helping Someone in Emotional Pain



Suicide is a major public health concern and a leading cause of death in the United States. Suicide affects people of all ages, genders, races, and ethnicities.

Suicide is complicated and tragic, but it can be preventable. **Knowing the warning signs for suicide and how to get help can help save lives.**

Here are 5 steps you can take to #BeThe1To help someone in emotional pain:

## 1. ASK:



“Are you thinking about killing yourself?” It’s not an easy question but studies show that asking at-risk individuals if they are suicidal does not increase suicides or suicidal thoughts.

## 2. KEEP THEM SAFE:



Reducing a suicidal person’s access to highly lethal items or places is an important part of suicide prevention. While this is not always easy, asking if the at-risk person has a plan and removing or disabling the lethal means can make a difference.

## 3. BE THERE:



Listen carefully and learn what the individual is thinking and feeling. Research suggests acknowledging and talking about suicide may in fact reduce rather than increase suicidal thoughts.

## 4. HELP THEM CONNECT:



Save the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline number (**call or text 988**) and the Crisis Text Line number (**741741**) in your phone so they’re there if you need them. You can also help make a connection with a trusted individual like a family member, friend, spiritual advisor, or mental health professional.

## 5. STAY CONNECTED:



Staying in touch after a crisis or after being discharged from care can make a difference. Studies have shown the number of suicide deaths goes down when someone follows up with the at-risk person.

For more information on suicide prevention:

[www.nimh.nih.gov/suicideprevention](http://www.nimh.nih.gov/suicideprevention)

[www.bethe1to.com](http://www.bethe1to.com)



National Institute  
of Mental Health