

Prevention

Warning Signs

Suicide can be prevented. While some suicides occur without any outward warning, most people who are suicidal do give warnings. Prevent the suicide of loved ones by learning to recognize the signs of someone at risk, taking those signs seriously and knowing how to respond to them.

Warning signs include:

Observable signs of serious depression:

- Unrelenting low mood
- Pessimism
- Hopelessness
- Desperation
- Anxiety, psychic pain and inner tension
- Withdrawal
- Sleep problems
- Increased alcohol and/or other drug use
- Recent impulsiveness and taking unnecessary risks
- Threatening suicide or expressing a strong wish to die
- Making a plan
- Giving away prized possessions
- Sudden or impulsive purchase of a firearm
- Obtaining other means of killing oneself such as poisons or medications
- Unexpected rage or anger

The emotional crises that usually precede suicide are often recognizable and treatable. Although most depressed people are not suicidal, most suicidal people are depressed. Serious depression can be manifested in obvious sadness, but often it is rather expressed as a loss of pleasure or withdrawal from activities that had been enjoyable. One can help prevent suicide through early recognition and treatment of depression and other psychiatric illnesses.

What To Do When You Fear Someone May Take Their Life

Most suicidal individuals give some warning of their intentions. The most effective way to prevent a friend or loved one from taking his or her life is to recognize the factors that put people at risk for suicide, take the warning signs seriously and know how to respond. Individually these warning signs may not mean anything. But collectively they might be indicators that someone may be contemplating hurting or killing themselves.