

# ACT® Now to Stop a Suicide

## *What to look for-and what to do-if you are concerned about someone*

### **Part I: Suicide Risk Questionnaire:**

*Have you heard someone say?*

- Life isn't worth living
- My family would be better off without me
- Next time I'll take enough pills to do the job right
- Take my (prized collection, valuables) I don't need this stuff anymore
- I won't be around to deal with that
- You'll be sorry when I'm gone
- I won't be in your way much longer
- I just can't deal with everything, life's too hard
- Nobody understands me, nobody feels the way I do
- There's nothing I can do to make it better
- I'd be better off dead
- I feel like there is no way out

*Have you observed?*

- Getting affairs in order (paying off debts)
- Giving away articles of personal or monetary value
- Signs of planning a suicide, such as obtaining a weapon, writing a suicide note

### **Part II: Depression Risk Questionnaire**

*Have you noticed the following signs of depression?*

- Depressed mood
- Changes in sleeping patterns (too much/little, disturbances)
- Change in weight or appetite
- Speaking and/or moving with unusual speed or slowness
- Loss of interest or pleasure in usual activities
- Withdrawal from family and friends
- Fatigue or loss of energy
- Diminished ability to think or concentrate
- Feelings of worthlessness or guilt
- Thoughts of death, suicide, or wishes to be dead

*If depression seems possible, have you also noticed?*

- Extreme anxiety, agitation, irritability or risky behavior
- Racing thoughts, excessive energy, reduced need for sleep
- Excessive drug and/or alcohol use or abuse
- Neglect of physical health
- Feelings of hopelessness

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### ***Questionnaire Interpretation - If you checked circles under:***

**Part I only:** Your friend may be at risk for suicide and should seek professional help immediately.

**Part II only:** Your friend may be suffering from depression and should seek further evaluation with a mental health professional or his/her primary care physician.

**Parts I and II:** The suicide risk is even higher -strongly encourage your friend to seek help ASAP!

## WHAT TO DO if you suspect a friend or loved one is suicidal

- ✓ **Do take it seriously.** 70% of all people who commit suicide give some warning of their intentions to a friend or member of their family.
- ✓ **Do be willing to listen.** Even if professional help is needed, your friend or loved one will be more willing to seek help if you have listened to him/her.
- ✓ **Do voice your concern.** Take the initiative to ask what is troubling your friend or loved one, and attempt to overcome any reluctance on their part to talk about it.
- ✓ **Do let the person know you care and understand.** Reassure your friend or loved one that he /she is not alone. Explain that, although powerful, suicidal feelings are temporary, depression can be treated and problems can be solved.
- ✓ **Do ask if the person has a specific plan for committing suicide.** Ask how far he/she has gone in carrying it out.
  - *Note: Asking about suicide does not cause a person to think about, or commit, suicide.*
- ✓ **Do get professional help immediately.** Bring your friend or loved one to the nearest emergency room or crisis center (if the person is already in treatment, contact his or her clinician). Your friend or loved one will be more likely to seek help if you accompany them.
- ✓ **Do follow up on treatment.** Take an active role in following up with the treatment process and medications. Be sure to notify the physician about any unexpected side effects or changes in behavior.
- ✓ **If for any reason you are unsure, uncomfortable, or unable to take action,** contact a crisis intervention # (see below) or call 911.

## WHAT NOT TO DO...

- ✗ Don't try to cheer the person up or tell them to snap out of it.
- ✗ Don't assume the situation will take care of itself.
- ✗ Don't act shocked or surprised at what the person says.
- ✗ Don't challenge or dare.
- ✗ Don't argue or debate moral issues.
- ✗ Don't be sworn to secrecy.
- ✗ Don't risk your personal safety. If the person acts in a threatening way, just leave and call 911.

### Emergency Numbers – 24 hour Crisis Intervention:

Clark County: 800-863-3560  
Marshfield: 715-384-5555  
Portage County: 800-472-3377  
Wisconsin Rapids: 715-421-2345  
Marathon County: 715-845-4326 or 800-799-0122  
National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 800-273-TALK ([www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org))

### Mid-State Student Affairs Resources:

- MSTC Student Affairs Office: 715-422-5445
- <http://www.mstc.edu/students/counseling.htm> with links to
  - Alcohol screening tests
  - Alcohol self-assessment tools
  - Quick Inventory of Depressive Symptomology
  - Wakefield screening test for depression
  - Test Yourself – Anxiety self-assessment
- Connect on Campus: <http://www.mstc.edu/pdf/supportservicesstaff.pdf>