

THERE IS help



How to Assist Older Adults Who Voice Suicidal Statements.

- If there is an immediate threat of suicide, call 911.
- Listen to the older adult and ask if there is a plan. Asking about a plan does not increase the likelihood of a person carrying out a plan.
- If there is a plan, ask specific questions about how they plan to carry out the suicide and assess the means by which they plan to carry it out.
- Offer to assist the older adult in contacting their health professional or counselor.
- Express empathy to the older adult and tell them that you care and that there is help available.
- Ask the older adult if there is anyone who could be contacted for additional support.
- Encourage the older adult to be more socially connected or engaged in meaningful activities

Encourage and Assist your older adult in calling any of the following phone numbers which are hotlines designed to listen and lend support to the older adult contemplating suicide:

- The Friendship Line 800-971-0016
- National Suicide Prevention Hotline at 800-273-8255
- YourLifelowa at 855-581-8111 or text 855-895-8398



Office of the State Long-Term Care

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help



You are Not Alone

Many older adults experience changes in their health which often result in a decline in their abilities to care for themselves and live independently. A little known fact is that the rate of suicide among older adults is increasing and quickly becoming a public health concern. The good news is that there is help available and suicide can be prevented.

Be aware of the following warning signs:

- Depression or persistent sadness, which is not a normal part of aging and can be treated
- Marked feelings of hopelessness, lack of interest in making future plans
- Feelings of loss of independence or a sense of purpose
- Medical conditions that significantly limit functioning or life expectancy
- Impulsivity due to cognitive impairment
- Inflexible personality or difficulty adapting to change
- Access to lethal means-firearms or other weapons, medications
- Risk taking behaviors or sudden personality changes
- Abuse of alcohol or medication
- Verbal suicide threats, such as, "You'd be better off without me"



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