



## HOW TO SUPPORT SURVIVORS OF SUICIDE ATTEMPTS

### NEED HELP NOW?

If you or someone you know is experiencing symptoms of depression or have suicidal thoughts, reach out for help:

### 911 FOR AN EMERGENCY

If the situation is potentially life-threatening, get immediate emergency assistance by dialing 9-1-1.

### CRISIS TEXT LINE

Text CONNECT to  
741741

### NATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION LIFELINE

1-800-273-TALK (8755)  
[suicidepreventionlifeline.org](https://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org)



**In Michigan**, one person dies by suicide every seven hours (American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, 2018). For every suicide death, there are 25 attempts. As a concerned family member, friend or community member, what can you do to support suicide attempt survivors?

**Tell the person you care.** Many people who consider or attempt suicide feel or have felt isolated and lonely. Communicating your care to the person can make a big difference.

**Listen.** The person may want to share their experience, thoughts or feelings with you. When listening, focus on hearing what the person is expressing without delving into problem-solving. Acknowledging what the person has shared can help the person to feel more connected to you.

**Ask what you can do to be supportive.** This might mean anything from helping the person find a mental health provider to assisting in making a schedule for the day or week to cooking a meal. Each person will have different needs and asking is the best way to know how to help.

**Help to make a safety plan.** People who survive suicide attempts benefit from developing a plan of what they might do or who they might reach out to in case they find themselves considering suicide in the future. You could help them to develop a safety plan, offer to be a contact person for them in the future, or do both.

**Encourage the person to engage with mental health professionals.** After a suicide attempt, mental health professionals such as psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers or certified peer specialists can be helpful in processing what happened and how the person is feeling.

**Keep in regular communication.** Has it been several days since you have communicated with the person? Check back in to see how they are doing.

# HOW TO SUPPORT SURVIVORS OF SUICIDE ATTEMPTS Continued

## WHAT ELSE CAN I DO TO SUPPORT A SUICIDE ATTEMPT SURVIVOR?

**Assist in building a network of support.** Help the person to think about other people who have been supportive in the past to create a network of support for the individual to be in contact with.

**Acknowledge your limits.** Share with the person what you are willing and able to do to lend support. If the person asks you to do something you cannot do or feel uncomfortable doing, it is okay to decline. Perhaps you can help the person to identify someone who can help with that task.

**Take care of yourself.** What helps for you to relieve stress or to feel refreshed? Maybe it's talking to a counselor, mentor or friend, or maybe going for a walk outside. While you are supporting others, you must also take care of yourself.

## WHAT IF THE PERSON DOES NOT WANT HELP OR DOES NOT WANT TO TALK ABOUT IT?

**That's okay.** You can express your care for them and let them know that if they want someone to talk to in the future, you are available.

## WHAT OTHER RESOURCES COULD BE HELPFUL?

**A Journey Toward Health and Hope** is a free handbook by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration for suicide attempt survivors to guide their recovery process: <https://store.samhsa.gov/product/journey-toward-health-hope-your-handbook-recovery-after-suicide-attempt/sma15-4419>

**American Foundation for Suicide Prevention** has many resources about how to support someone after an attempt, as well as resources for survivors: <http://afsp.org>

**The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline** is available as a resource to people in distress as well as their friends and family members. They can be contacted at 1-800-273-TALK (8755). <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org>

## REFERENCE

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention. (2018). *Suicide facts & figures: Michigan 2018*. New York: Author. Retrieved from <http://chapterland.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/13/2018/06/Michigan-State-Facts.pdf>

## CREATED BY

Courtney Cuthbertson, Ph.D, Community Behavioral Health specialist, MSU Extension

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