

Suicide Signposts

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Warning signs for suicide cannot be contained in an exhaustive list as each person responds individually. This list is not meant to be that of a medical professional but rather a caring friend or loved one. If you suspect someone is suicidal, seek professional help immediately or call the suicide hotline or 911.

1. Withdrawal from family and friends - pulling back from significant relationships.
2. Sleeping irregularities. Sleeping when others are awake fosters isolation (as does staying awake while others are sleeping).
3. Apathy to activities that once brought pleasure.
4. Marked neglect of personal hygiene.
5. Significant increase in drug or alcohol abuse - maybe temporary relief until a more permanent escape can be found.
6. Preoccupation with topics such as death and suicide.
7. Talk of suicide plans and methods.
8. Withdrawal from talking to friends about problems - may signal hopelessness concerning change or solutions.
9. A sudden change of emotion from depression to apparent happiness - may indicate the person has decided on a method and a time. Making the decision often triggers emotional elevation.
10. Giving away items of significance to family and friends - making statements like "I won't need this any longer."
11. Returning borrowed items, getting affairs in order, and/or making amends.
12. Visiting family and friends to say goodbye with a note of finality in conversations, or writing letters with a note of finality.
13. Veiled threats, such as "You will be sorry you treated me this way."
14. Evidence of implementing suicide plans and questions about heaven.

There is nothing wrong with directly asking a person if they have been thinking about suicide. Asking shows you are alert and that you care, which is exactly what a suicidal person needs at that moment. Deuteronomy 30:15-20 tells us to "CHOOSE LIFE."