

SUICIDE

People may think of suicide as the only solution when they feel bad. They may experience certain emotions which they think they cannot cope with. Feelings such as loneliness, unhappiness, and worthlessness experienced by people can lead to deep despair and hopelessness for the future. The intensity of these emotions sometimes prevents an individual from seeing the other solution options. However, it should not be forgotten that these suicidal thoughts are usually temporary. It is possible to ease these feelings which seems to be very hard to manage and to increase the ability to cope with these emotions.

The important thing is to remember that one does not have to go through this process alone. In the presence of suicidal thoughts, it is important to remember that the person can get support from a trusted friend, family member or a mental health professional.

Some Signals Before Suicide

Changes to consider that may signal an individual is thinking and/or planning to suicide;

- Preparing for suicide; talking about death or suicide, buying lethal tools such as weapons.
- Talking about suicide, death or the desire to hurt oneself (such as "life is not worth living, the world is a better place without me, I can't stand this life anymore, everything is over, I'll kill myself, I don't want to live, I wish a car crushes me and I will die").
- Losing interest on things he/she used to enjoy before.
- Abandoning academic life, moving away from the social environment, not paying attention to personal appearance.
- Self-loathing and self-judgment.
- Visiting family and/or friends unexpectedly, saying goodbye as if they will never meet again.
- Shifting between extreme emotions (positive and negative).
- Taking vital risks (such as driving too fast, consuming high levels of alcohol and drugs).
- Giving valuable personal belongings to others.
- Feeling helpless, hopeless and worthless. To think there is no reason to live.
- To think being alive is causing a burden for someone.

What Are the Risk Factors?

**** Risk factors are factors that increase the probability of a person attempting suicide:***

- Past suicide attempts.
- Recent loss of loved ones.
- Severe depression.
- Having a psychiatric condition such as schizophrenia, personality disorders.
- Regular and heavy alcohol/substance consumption.
- Exposure to physical, sexual or psychological violence.
- Major changes in life, such as moving to another country, ending a relationship/marriage, losing a job.

Some Myths About Suicide

- "People who talk about suicide don't commit suicide.": You can never be sure of this. Talking about suicide can be a cry for help. That's why every suicidal threat should be taken seriously!
- "People who are inclined to commit suicide cannot be helped. If the person decided to commit suicide, no one can stop him": Suicidal urges may be experienced very violently, but it is short-lived. A professional can help someone who decided to commit suicide.
- "All those who try to commit suicide have a psychological disorder.": People who try to commit suicide may not have a psychological disorder. They can be depressed, sad and hopeless, but that doesn't mean they have a psychological disorder.
- "Talking about suicide increases the likelihood of attempting suicide.": On the contrary, speaking openly about suicide can prevent a possible suicide attempt.

How can I help my suicidal friend?

- Explain clearly that you are worried about your friend and value him/her. Make sure he/she understands that he/she is not alone.
- Listen to him/her without making any judgment. Take his/her words seriously. Stay calm as much as possible.
- Support the individual by trying to understand his difficulties. Never underestimate the problems he/she mentions.
- Avoid discussing or interpreting your friend's words. It is important to stay away from suggestions. Do not humiliate the individual to change his/her mind, it will only increase his/her guilt.
- Ask if he/she felt similarly before, and if so, how did he/she was coping at those times.
- Try to find out what kind of help he/she needs.
- Keep your friend away from objects that can be used for suicide (weapon, knife, etc.)
- If your friend asks you to keep his/her suicide plan as a secret, explain that you will not do so. It is a huge responsibility. Do not risk it.
- If you believe your friend is thinking of committing suicide, ask him/her. "I think you might commit suicide. Do you have such a plan or thought?" This can make them more comfortable to share their feelings.
- Encourage them to have professional support and assistance. Support them by telling that you will help them getting the first appointment and accompany them to their first appointment. Highlight that they can always get some help, and what they are going through is temporary.
- If the person has a scheduled and detailed suicide plan, this indicates an emergency. If this is the case, do not leave your friend alone until a mental health specialist shows up. A mental health specialist should see the individual as soon as possible. If possible, the person can be taken to the hospital or an ambulance can be called. Stay calm as much as possible, don't hesitate to call for emergency help.

What If I Think to Commit Suicide?

- When a person is in emotional pain, perceptions and thoughts can be greatly affected by this. However, it should not be forgotten that ending your life is not a way to end this emotional pain.
- The feelings that seems to be extremely permanent will fade away. You will get through these emotions and situation.
- Many people think about death during their life time but continue to live. Because times of crisis are temporary.
- Give some time to yourself.
- During this difficult period, there is always a person who will be there to support you without judging and a person you can openly talk to. This could be a friend, a family member, or a mental health professional.
- Stay away from places and objects that can be used to hurt yourself.
- You may prefer to spend most of your time alone during this period. However, try to stay connected with people who you will feel relatively comfortable. Go out of the house, even if it is only for once during the day.
- Avoid using alcohol and drugs.
- If you feel very helpless and hopeless, if your suicidal thoughts have turned into an intention and/or plan, contact a specialist from Koç University Counseling Service (KURES) or a mental health specialist out of the school as soon as possible and get support immediately.
- In an emergency, you can go to the Koç University Health Center or call (0212) 338-11-00 to reach the Health Center.

FOR MORE INFORMATION: KURES-COUNSELING SERVICE



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