

How Do I Help Someone I'm Worried About?

There are times when you may find yourself worried or concerned about a family member, a friend, or a colleague. You may recognize that there is something going on – perhaps a change in behavior or a statement that doesn't feel quite right. You want to help them but you may have trouble finding the right words or knowing what to do.

The most important thing is to assume that you are the only person that is going to reach out to them.

Imagine you are riding down the highway and you see a car pulled over with a flat tire. If you're like most people, you assume that the person who's broken down has called for help or that someone passing by has made the call. We often think, "*Someone else will take care of it.*" What if no one does?

If you're worried about whether you'll get it right, remember that many people who are experiencing suicidal thoughts feel a sense of relief that someone has finally noticed that they are struggling or in pain.

Here are some tips for having the conversation:

- Talk to the person in a place where you can have a conversation freely and without distractions.
- Give the person your full attention. Turn off your phone, turn your body towards them, and make eye contact. The person needs to feel that you care and that the conversation is important to you.
- Listen to their story without judgment and without the goal of fixing their problems.
- Ask directly about suicide – calmly and without judgment.
- Let them know their life matters to you.

If someone says they're thinking about suicide:

- Take them seriously.
- Help the person remove lethal means like firearms and drugs.
- Do not leave them alone.
- Call the Samaritans Crisis Line, 988, or 911.
- Be sure to follow up with the person after the crisis to see how they are doing.

Your willingness to reach out and support someone you're concerned about may just save a life – and you don't have to do it alone. If you call the Crisis Lines because you're worried about someone in your life, our Samaritans-trained volunteer will ask you a few questions to gain understanding of your situation and focus on ways you can help them find local support.

Please call our Crisis Line by dialing 988 at any time for help if someone you love is struggling.



The Samaritans on Cape Cod and the Islands

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Local Crisis Line: (508) 548-8900 | National Suicide & Crisis Lifeline: 988