

# Help for People Who Are Thinking About Suicide

## **What should I do if someone I love is thinking about suicide?**

Get help immediately by calling the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (1-800-273-TALK [8255]) or going to your doctor or a hospital. It is important to move weapons (for example, kitchen knives) and dangerous medicines, including prescriptions and over-the-counter medicines like Tylenol, to a safe place away from your loved one. Make sure your loved one is not alone.

## **How are suicidal thoughts treated?**

There are many ways to help people with suicidal thoughts, including counseling and medicine. If your loved one needs more help, he or she may need to go to a hospital for treatment.

## **Why do people commit suicide?**

There is no one reason why people start thinking about suicide; however, depression and other mental illnesses can lead to suicidal thoughts. Certain life events, such as the death of a family member or friend, can also cause these thoughts.

## **Someone I know committed suicide—what do I need to know?**

Many people who know someone who committed suicide blame themselves or are angry, but you are not to blame. After someone you know commits suicide, it is important to take care of yourself and get help if needed.

## **What support is there for suicide survivors?**

Some people choose to surround themselves with their friends and family. Others will find comfort in religious groups. Survivor support groups can also help. You can find a list of support groups online at the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention at <http://www.afsp.org>. You can also call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline.

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**This handout is provided to you by your family doctor and the American Academy of Family Physicians. Other health-related information is available from the AAFP online at <http://familydoctor.org>.**

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