

Factsheet: Suicide Following an Attempt

What You Need to Know About a Family Member or Friend Who Has Been Suicidal

Make safety a priority following a suicide attempt. Research has shown that a person who has attempted to end his or her life has a much higher risk of later dying by suicide. This risk is higher during the period immediately following discharge from inpatient psychiatric care. Safety is the individual's responsibility, but often a person who feels suicidal has a difficult time making good choices. As a family member or friend, you can help your loved one make better choices while reducing the risk of another suicide attempt.

Reduce the Risk at Home

To help reduce the risk of self-harm or suicide at home, here are some things to consider:

- Guns are high risk and the leading means of death for suicidal people – they should be taken out of the home and secured.
- Overdoses are common and can be lethal. If it is necessary to keep pain relievers such as aspirin and Tylenol in the home, only keep small quantities or consider keeping medications in a locked container. Remove unused or expired medication from the home.
- Alcohol use or abuse can decrease inhibitions and cause people to act more freely on their feelings. As with pain relievers, keep only small amounts of alcohol in the home, or none at all.

Build Support Systems

Following a suicide attempt, efforts must be made to prevent another attempt. Discussions about how to protect your loved one should be a joint effort between the individual, friends and other family members, as well as any treatment providers.

Here are steps you can take:

- Be aware of “triggers” such as an anniversary of a loss, alcohol or stress from relationships.
- Build a network of support for your family member or friend with mental health professionals, family, friends and community resources.
- Work with your loved one's strengths to promote his or her safety.
- Encourage communication and honesty in your relationship.

Remember that safety cannot be guaranteed by anyone. The goal is to reduce risks and build support systems for everyone in the family.

Families and friends commonly provide a safety net and a vision of hope for their loved one that has been suicidal. This can be emotionally exhausting. Never try to handle this situation alone. Look to your own support network for relief.

Source: *National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: After an Attempt, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, www.samsha.gov*

- Continued on back

If you have questions or concerns about someone who may be suicidal, call 1-800-273-TALK (8255).

Other Resources

- American Association of Suicidology
Website: www.suicidology.org
- Nebraska State Suicide Prevention Coalition
Website: www.suicideprevention.nebraska.edu
- SPRC Suicide Prevention Resource Center
Website: www.sprc.org

Crisis Assistance

If someone you know is in crisis now, seek help immediately.

- Call 1-800-273-TALK (8255) to reach a 24-hour crisis center or dial 911 for immediate assistance or go to the nearest emergency department.
- Call CenterPointe Crisis Response Line at 402-475-6695.



Emergency mental health care

The Bryan mental health emergency department provides emergency mental health care/crisis assessments to determine if hospitalization is needed.

- Available 24 hours a day, seven days a week
- Go to Bryan West Campus emergency department, 2300 S. 16th St., Lincoln Neb.

Non-emergency mental health care

- Contact the Bryan Counseling Center
- Phone: 402-481-5991
- Hours: Monday-Friday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
- Location: Bryan West Campus, 2300 S. 16th St., Lincoln Neb.

Online, confidential depression, anxiety and alcohol screening, go to: bryanhealth.org/online-screenings

Bryan Medical Center Bryan West Campus

2300 S. 16th St.
Lincoln, NE 68502

bryanhealth.org

