



# Every Conversation Counts: An Educator's Guide to Suicide Prevention

As an educator, your words can make a difference. This guide provides practical tips to help you engage students in meaningful conversations about their well-being.

## Encouraging Students to Open Up

- **Create a Safe and Supportive Environment**  
Let students know that your classroom is a judgment-free zone. Acknowledge that it's okay to discuss difficult feelings.
- **Ask Thoughtful, Open-Ended Questions**  
Foster deeper conversations with questions like, "How have you been feeling lately?" or "Is there anything on your mind that you'd like to share?"
- **Be Attentive and Listen Actively**  
Give students your full attention, and listen more than you speak. Sometimes, they just need someone to hear them.
- **Validate Their Feelings**  
Show empathy: "It's completely normal to feel this way, and I'm here to help you through it."
- **Regular Check-Ins**  
Make a habit of checking in with students, whether through informal conversations or scheduled one-on-ones.

## What to Say to Support a Student

- **"I'm Here for You"**  
Reassure them: "You're not alone in this. I'm here to listen and support you."
- **"It's Okay to Talk About Your Feelings"**  
Normalize the conversation: "It's important to talk about what you're going through. I'm here to help."
- **"How Can I Support You?"**  
Invite them to express their needs: "What can I do to make things easier for you right now?"
- **"Let's Work Together to Find Help"**  
If they're struggling, offer assistance: "We can talk to the school counselor together if you're comfortable with that."
- **"You're Important, and Your Feelings Matter"**  
Reinforce their value: "Your well-being is important to me, and your feelings matter."

## Recognizing When to Take Action

- **Expressions of Despair or Hopelessness**  
If a student talks about feeling hopeless, overwhelmed, or mentions self-harm, take it seriously and seek immediate help.
- **Sudden Behavioral Changes**  
Notice if a student withdraws, shows a drop in academic performance, or exhibits signs of distress. These may be indicators of a deeper issue.

## Resources for Immediate Support

- **School Counseling Services**  
Contact your school's counseling department for immediate support and intervention.
- **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline**  
1-800-273-TALK (8255)
- **Crisis Text Line**  
Text HELLO to 741741

## Remember, Every Conversation Counts

As an educator, your daily interactions can profoundly impact your students' lives. By fostering open dialogue and being a supportive presence, you can help prevent suicide and promote a safe, caring school environment.