



Every Conversation Counts: A Parent's Guide to Suicide Prevention

Talking with your child about their feelings could save their life. This guide offers practical tips to help you start and navigate those crucial conversations.

Getting Your Child to Open Up

- **Create a Safe Space**
Let your child know that they can talk to you about anything without fear of judgment. Choose a quiet, comfortable setting.
- **Ask Open-Ended Questions**
Encourage more than yes/no answers. Try, "What's been on your mind lately?" or "How are you really feeling?"
- **Be Patient and Listen**
Give them time to respond and listen more than you speak. Silence can be powerful; let them fill it.
- **Express Understanding**
Show empathy: "I understand that you're going through something tough."
- **Regular Check-Ins**
Make these conversations a regular part of your routine. Even casual check-ins show that you care.

What to Say

- **"I'm Here for You"**
Reassure your child that they're not alone: "No matter what, I'm here to support you."
- **"It's Okay to Feel This Way"**
Normalize their emotions: "It's okay to feel sad, anxious, or overwhelmed. Let's talk about it."
- **"Help Me Understand"**
Invite them to share more: "Can you help me understand what you're going through?"
- **"We'll Get Through This Together"**
Offer your partnership: "We'll figure this out together. You don't have to do this alone."
- **"Let's Find Someone Who Can Help"**
If the situation is serious, suggest seeking professional help: "Talking to a counselor might help. I can help set it up."

Recognizing When to Take Action

- **Expressions of Hopelessness**
If your child talks about feeling hopeless or trapped, take it seriously and seek help immediately.
- **Sudden Changes in Behavior**
If they withdraw, lose interest in things they used to enjoy, or start talking about death, reach out for support.

Resources for Immediate Support

- **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline**
1-800-273-TALK (8255)
- **Crisis Text Line**
Text HELLO to 741741
- **School Counselor**
Contact your child's school to connect with a counselor or mental health resources.

Remember, Every Conversation Counts

Taking the time to talk with your child about their feelings is one of the most powerful things you can do as a parent. Keep the dialogue open, show them they're not alone, and remind them that help is always available.