

Little tips

for helping someone open up when something's up

 World Suicide Prevention Day 2023

If someone is feeling suicidal, it might be hard to get through to them.

They might be distant or distracted or feel disconnected from the world and their own emotions. Asking someone if they're having suicidal thoughts can give them permission to tell you how they feel.

You don't have to be an expert to help someone open up. The fact that you care is what matters.

1 How to spot when something might be up

Signs to look out for:

- Not wanting to do things they usually enjoy.
- Finding everyday things overwhelming.
- Not replying to messages, or being distant.
- Avoiding people or seeming quiet.
- Appearing restless or agitated.
- Easily tearful.
- Drinking or using drugs to cope with feelings.

2 How to open up a conversation

Showing you care builds trust to open up:

- Choose a good time, and somewhere without distractions.
- Use open questions that need more than a yes/no answer.
- 'How are things? I've noticed you don't seem quite yourself.'
- Listen well. 'How's that making you feel?'
- Avoid giving your view of what's wrong, or what they should do.

3 Asking about suicidal thoughts

It's OK to ask. You could try:

- Have you thought about ending your life?
- Are you saying that you want to die?
- Are you thinking of ending your life because you want to be dead, or is it because you want the situation you're in or the way you feel to stop?

It's normal to feel anxious about asking, but it could save someone's life. Remember, just being there to listen and showing you care can help.

4 How to help someone get more help

If it feels like the person is really struggling to cope:

- 'Would you like to get some help?'
- 'Have you talked to your GP?'
- 'Would you like me to come with you?'
- 'You can call or email Samaritans for free, day or night.'
- 'If it helps, you can talk to me any time.'
- If you think it's an emergency or someone has tried to harm themselves – call 999.

For more information go to samaritans.org/supportsomeone

If supporting someone is affecting you, Samaritans are here to listen.

Call free day or night on

116 123