

# How to talk about Suicide



## The statistics.

In Australia, suicide is the leading cause of death for young people aged 15-24, and every year around 300 young people die by suicide. For us, as I'm sure it is for you, that's 300 too many.

Raising awareness of the issue, providing support to those who are struggling, and making sure that young people have access to mental health literacy and care is key to reducing these statistics.

## So how do we talk to a young person about suicide, or about losing a loved one to suicide?

The important thing is to be open and honest.

### Here are some tips:

- **Start by asking the young person what they know about suicide.** This will help you gauge their understanding of the topic and what they need to know.
- **Use age-appropriate language.** Be honest and direct but avoid using graphic or upsetting language.
- **Answer the young person's questions honestly.** Don't sugarcoat things or try to protect them from the truth.
- **Be patient and understanding.** This is a lot for a young person to process, so give them time to ask questions and express their feelings.
- **Reassure the young person that they are not alone.** Let them know that there are people who care about them and want to help.
- **Encourage the young person to talk to a trusted adult if they are feeling sad or hopeless.** This could be a parent, teacher, counsellor, or other adult they trust.
- You can also use resources like the Kids Helpline (1800 55 1800) or Lifeline (13 11 14) to help you talk to your young person about suicide.



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## Warning Signs

During Kookaburra Kids camp chat groups we often talk about warning signs, and what to look out for if someone is having a possible mental health issue or suicidal thoughts.

## Warning signs to look out for

- Talking about wanting to die or feeling hopeless.
- Talking about feeling like a burden to others.
- Increased risk-taking behaviours, such as reckless driving or substance abuse.
- Changes in mood, such as becoming suddenly withdrawn or angry.
- Changes in sleep patterns, such as sleeping too much or too little.
- Changes in eating habits, such as losing or gaining a lot of weight.
- Giving away prized possessions.
- Making preparations for death, such as writing a will or saying goodbye to loved ones.

If you or someone you know is thinking about suicide, please reach out for help. There are many resources available, including:

- **Lifeline: 13 11 14**
- **Kids Helpline: 1800 55 1800**
- **HeadSpace: 1800 650 890**

Suicide is a serious issue, but it is one that can be prevented. By talking to our young people about suicide and being aware of the warning signs, we can help save lives.

**If you or someone you know are in immediate danger, please call 000.**

