



This is a fast reference for the moment someone confides a suicide crisis in you, not a substitute for professional care. It follows the same steps used by the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline and the National Institute of Mental Health. If a situation ever feels physically dangerous, call 911 first and step back to keep yourself safe too.

Ask and Listen

- Ask directly, "Are you thinking about suicide?" This does not increase risk, and it often brings relief.
- Listen without rushing to fix anything or offer advice; steady presence matters more than finding the right words.
- Do not promise unconditional secrecy; tell them you may need to involve someone else to help keep them safe.

Keep Them Safe for Right Now

- Ask about access to anything they could use to hurt themselves, but you do not have to handle this alone; a 988 counselor can walk you through it, and a weapon in the house is a job for someone trained.
- Do not leave the person alone if the danger feels immediate.
- Remember that keeping someone safe until trained help arrives is the whole job, not a smaller version of it.

Connect Them to Real Help

- Call or text 988 for the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline, available 24 hours a day.
- Use online chat if talking out loud feels impossible for them right now.
- Call 911 immediately if a weapon is present or an overdose is already in progress; do not wait to decide which number is the right one.

Protect Yourself Too

- Step back and call 911 rather than trying to manage a physically dangerous situation alone.
- Follow up a day or two later; a simple check in text or call genuinely matters.
- If this conversation stirred up thoughts of suicide in you, not just grief or memory, that is its own signal to call 988 for yourself; it is part of doing this safely, not a detour from it.
- Reach out to your own support afterward, whether that is a suicide loss support group, DBSA, or NAMI; it is normal for this to have stirred something up in you too.

Source

<https://sunflowersaftersuicide.com/the-unintended-gatekeeper-when-others-confide-a-suicide-crisis/>