



"She made me promise not to tell, but I wouldn't. I told her that her life meant more than her friendship. It was the hardest thing I ever said, but I'm glad I did. She's getting help, and we're still friends."

## WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Of course, a parent or guardian is usually the best adult to help with this kind of thing. If needed, consider approaching any other trusted adult, maybe another adult family member, a teacher, coach, school counselor or nurse. Clergy or leaders from faith organizations or youth groups also may be available to help.

- Talk to a trusted adult that can help.
- Take all thoughts, behaviors, or suicidal statements seriously.
- Never keep it a secret.** It may save someone's life. If a friend swears you to secrecy, it could be deadly; don't risk losing a friend to suicide.
- Offer to help. Go with the person to the doctor or hospital.
- Reassure your friend that there is help and that suicidal thoughts are only temporary.
- Offer to go with your friend to his or her parents, counselor, doctor or adult who can help.
- United Way Helpline 211 for more information and referrals.
- 1-800-273-TALK (8255) is the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, answered 24/7.
- Ask for help until you find it.



"I knew something was wrong with him. He talked about dying all the time. So I talked to our coach. He said I may have saved my friend's life."

## IF SOMEONE YOU KNOW SHOWS THE SIGNS OF THINKING ABOUT SUICIDE, REMEMBER THE ABC'S OF SUICIDE PREVENTION.

**A** ASK if she is feeling depressed or thinking about ending her life. Talking to your friend about suicide will not cause her to attempt suicide, or even put the thought in her mind. Instead, it will provide your friend a sense of relief.

**B** BELIEVE your friend if he says he is thinking of suicide. However, even if he **denies** being suicidal, he still may be, if the signs of depression and suicide are present.

**C** Get an adult to **CALL** a health care professional as soon as possible if you believe your friend is suffering from depression. If she is suicidal, call 911 or take her to the emergency room at your local hospital. Hospitals have trained mental health specialists to complete an assessment of risk. Do not leave your friend alone, even for a minute. She may be having a life-threatening emergency.

**D** DO NOT **GIVE UP** on a friend who is suicidal. That friend is ill and needs your help. He may be irritable or unpleasant – these are the effects of the illness. Healthy young people are not irritable or unpleasant the majority of the time. Have an adult get your friend the health care needed.

"He" and "she" are used alternately for simplicity. It's very important to remember that depression happens to both young men and women, girls and boys.



"I have a friend who was suicidal but is now recovering from depression. Your information helped me know how to help her. I just wanted to say thank you for helping save my friend."