

PAPYRUS

# CONVERSATION STARTERS



Asking about suicide saves lives. But we know it's not easy to know where to start – or what to say.

If you're worried about someone, the conversation starters below can help. It's normal to feel scared or unsure. But talking about suicide doesn't make it more likely to happen. Evidence shows it reduces stigma and is often the first step towards recovery.

Many young people feel completely alone with their thoughts of suicide. They don't feel they can tell anyone. By asking directly, you're showing them they can.

## TALKING ABOUT SUICIDE DOES NOT MAKE IT MORE LIKELY TO HAPPEN

Suicide is still the biggest killer of young people under 35 in the UK. We all have a role to play in changing that – by creating a world where suicide isn't taboo, and where young people feel safe enough to ask for help.

### HOW TO ASK DIRECTLY

Ask them directly – 'are you thinking about suicide?' Using the word directly tells them it's safe to be honest with you. It opens the door.

"Sometimes, when people are feeling the way you are they think about suicide. Is that what you're thinking about?"

"Are you telling me you want to kill yourself? End your life? Die? Die by suicide?"

"It sounds like you're thinking about suicide, is that right?"

"It sounds like life feels too hard for you right now and you want to kill yourself, is that right?"

### HOW TO OFFER HOPE

Reassure them that they're not alone and that you'll look for support together.

"It's not uncommon to have thoughts of suicide. With help and support many people can work through these thoughts and stay safe."

"There are organisations that offer support like Papyrus HopeLine 24/7. I can help you find their contact details."

"You've shown a lot of strength in telling me this. I want to help you find support."

"There is hope. There is help available and we can find it together."

### HOW TO LISTEN

If someone is thinking about suicide, let them talk. Let them feel heard. They may experience an enormous sense of relief that someone is willing to sit with their darkest thoughts without judgement.

"It sounds as though things are really hard at the moment.... Can you tell me a bit more?"

"Things must be so painful for you to feel like there is no way out. I want to listen and help."

"Take your time and tell me what's happening for you at the moment."

"I am so sorry you're feeling this way. Can you tell me more about how you are feeling?"

"Can you tell me more about why you want to die?"

"What has brought you to this place/to feel this way?"

"It's hard and scary to talk about suicide but take your time and I will listen."

0300 102 2470  
HopeLine 24/7