

# AS+K?

Ask About Suicide  
To Save a Life™

South Carolina



Offer Hope to Prevent a Tragic Loss of Life.

**1-800-273-8255** National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. Please store this number in your phone.

## When You Hear or Observe Suicidal Language or Behavior:

- **AS+K?** about suicide.
- **Seek** more information.
- **Safety First** by considering ways a person at risk can find immediate support
- **Secure Lethal Means** help put time and distance between someone at risk and highly lethal means.
- **Know** where and how to refer (take action).

**If someone is in immediate risk of suicide, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department. Do not leave the person alone.**

## AS+K? About Suicide to Save a Life

- How to **AS+K?**
  - Make a connection, Stay non-judgmental and practice active listening.
- Ways to **AS+K?**
  - "Sometimes when people are sad, as you are, they think about suicide. Have you ever thought about it?" "Do you want to go to bed and never wake up?"
  - "Have you thought about suicide?" "Do you want to kill yourself?" "Are you thinking about suicide?"
- **Always AS+K?** – it is the most important step! If you cannot do it, find someone who can. **Call 1-800-273-8255(TALK) or text the Crisis Text Line – "HOPE4SC" to 741741**

## Seek More Information

- Seek a private area to talk. Seek to establish a relationship through continued active listening. Comment on what you see and observe non-judgmentally. Listen for:
  - Perceived problems or challenges they are facing.
  - Support network and persons who have helped or are helping.
  - Help seeking behavior they have used in the past.

## Safety First

- Find out who and where they normally go for help (family, friends, faith leader, neighbor, roommate). Find out if they have a regular doctor, mental health provider or counselor. **Always include: 1-800-273-TALK (8255)**
- Connecting someone at risk to caring support systems is an important element of keeping someone safe.
- Connecting to support conveys the message that help **IS** available and there is **HOPE**.



## Secure Lethal Means

- If appropriate, consider access to highly lethal means.
- Putting time and distance between someone at risk of suicide and highly lethal means can help save a life.

## Know How and Where to Refer

- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline **1-800-273-8255**. If you are military or veteran connected, Press 1.
- Crisis Text Line: Text HOPE4SC to 741741
- South Carolina Crisis Lines can be found at: <https://scdmh.net> or call 833-364-2274

## Suicide in South Carolina<sup>1</sup>

- Based on current data, there are more than 850 suicide deaths in 2019 in our state.
- The rate of suicide death is 16.2 per 100,000
- Demographic trends of concern are ages 01-14 and 15-19
- The highest rates of suicide (suicides per 100,000 population) occur in White, non-Hispanic males in the middle age adults.

## What do we know about suicide?

- Research indicates there is no single cause of suicide, however there is the belief that many of those who die by suicide have an underlying mental health or substance misuse condition. The most common mental health condition is depression.
- Research indicates that more males die by suicide, but more females attempt suicide.
- Some of the highest death rates (numbers per 100,000 population) are in native American population and adult white males.

## Suicide is Preventable: AS+K?

**AFSP Warning Signs:** Take Immediate Action - Do Not Leave Someone Who is At Risk of Suicide Alone if you observe or hear:



- **Talk:** Talking, planning or writing about death, dying, suicide or killing oneself, feelings of hopelessness, feeling trapped, unbearable physical or emotional pain.
- **Behavior:** Substance use, looking for lethal means, withdrawing or isolating from family, friends or social activities, giving away possessions, saying goodbye, seeking access to lethal means such as medication or firearms.
- **Mood:** Depression, anxiety, loss of interest, irritability, humiliation/shame, agitation, anger, relief/sudden improvement.

**If you perceive immediate risk: Call 911**, nearest emergency department, health or mental health providers, your county's mobile crisis outreach team.

**Take All Signs Seriously and Refer to a Health or Mental Health Professional – signs such as:**

- **Feelings or Emotional Signs:** no reason for living; feeling trapped; hopelessness; dramatic mood changes (high or low); anxiety, agitation or feeling like they are a burden to others.
- **Behavioral Signs:** increased substance abuse; withdrawal from friends and social connection; rage, anger, revenge; reckless or risk activities; and/or: unable to sleep or sleeping all the time.

<sup>1</sup> Data from suicidology.org, and CDC's WISQARS system



### Risk Factors

- Risk factors are characteristics that make it more likely that individuals will consider, attempt or die by suicide. They include:
  - Mood and substance use disorders, often co-occurring, are significant risk factors for suicide. Unipolar depression, bipolar disorder, and schizophrenia are strongly associated with suicidal behavior.
  - Previous suicide attempt(s),
  - Loss (job, financial, relationship), access to lethal means, and exposure to clusters of suicide.
  - Social-Cultural factors can include lack of social support, mental health stigma, barriers to health and mental health care, and cultural or religious beliefs that normalize suicide.

### Protective Factors

- Protective factors are positive conditions, personal and social resources that make it less likely that individuals will consider, attempt or die by suicide. They include:
  - Effective clinical care
  - Improve problem solving skills
  - Connectedness to peers, schools and social organizations, military/veteran transition programs, faith based communities and others.
  - Contact with care givers



**MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES**  
 National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (call or chat):  
[SuicidePreventionLifeline.org](http://SuicidePreventionLifeline.org)  
 1-800-273-TALK (8255)  
 Crisis Text Line: Text HOPE4SC to 741741



Community Crisis Response & Intervention  
 1-833-364-2274

**CRISIS TEXT LINE |**

Text "HOPE4SC" to 741741 or [crisistextline.org](http://crisistextline.org)

The Trevor Project (LGBTQ Youth)  
 Call: 1-866-488-7368  
[www.thetrevorproject.org](http://www.thetrevorproject.org)

Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration  
[www.samhsa.gov](http://www.samhsa.gov)

United Way of the Midlands 211 or 803-733-5408 or 866-892-9211

Suicide Prevention Resource Center: [www.sprc.org](http://www.sprc.org)

NAMI South Carolina  
[www.namiSC.org](http://www.namiSC.org)

American Foundation of Suicide Prevention [www.afsp.org](http://www.afsp.org)  
 American Association of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry  
[www.aacap.org](http://www.aacap.org)

South Carolina Department of Mental Health [www.scdmh.net](http://www.scdmh.net)

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