



Suicide Awareness: Understanding, Recognizing, and Supporting



"Our ancestors survived so that we could be here. Your life has purpose, and your community stands with you." -Author Unknown

Suicide is deeply complex, but please know that it can be prevented and no one has to carry this weight alone. It can affect anyone, from any background, at any stage of life. When mental health struggles, overwhelming stress, or feelings of hopelessness feel like too much to bear, You can find support.

Suicide prevention is about Life Promotion—rooted in the understanding that connection to culture, family, and the land is our greatest medicine. While historical and generational trauma can feel overwhelming, our cultural roots provide a powerful shield of resilience. You are never a burden; you are a vital piece of our future.

Recognize the Warning Signs

Most people who consider suicide show warning signs through their behavior, words, or mood shifts. Keep an eye out for these critical changes: **Verbal Cues:** Talking about wanting to die, feeling like a burden to others, feeling trapped, or having no reason to live. **Behavioral Cues:** Withdrawing from family, friends, and activities. Giving away prized possessions or making a will. Searching for methods online or buying a weapon. Increased use of alcohol or drugs. **Verbalizing Hopelessness:** Saying things like "Everyone would be better off without me" or "I just want the pain to stop." **Mood Changes:** Displaying extreme mood swings, sudden calmness after a long depression, severe anxiety, or expressions of hopelessness.

The 3-Step Action Plan

If you are worried about someone, take these steps to wrap them in support:

- **Ask Openly and Directly:** Don't be afraid to ask, "Are you thinking about suicide?" Speaking the words out loud breaks the isolation and shows you care deeply.
- **Listen with an Open Heart:** Put aside judgment. You don't need to have all the answers. Just listen, validate their pain, and let them know they are not alone.
- **Lean on Community & Culture:** Do not keep secrets. Connect them to trusted tribal elders, cultural leaders, helplines or professional counselors. Remind them of their worth to the community. Stay with them if they are in immediate danger.

Culturally Centered & Confidential Resources (24/7)

If you or someone you love needs a safe place to turn, free support is available right now:

- **988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline:** Call or Text 988 Free, confidential support available 24/7. (Many areas route directly to counselors trained in Indigenous cultural competency).
- **StrongHearts Native Helpline:** Call or Text 1-844-7NATIVE(1-844-762-8483) A confidential, culturally centered helpline specifically for Native people, dealing with domestic/relationship wellness and mental health.
- **Crisis Text Line:** Text NATIVE to 741741. Connect with a crisis counselor over text messaging immediately.
- **We R Native:** Visit wernative.org. A comprehensive health and wellness resource created by Native youth, for Native youth.
- **The Trevor Project:** Call 866-488-7386 or Text START to 678-678LGBTQ+ youth crisis support.
- **Veterans Crisis Line:** Call 988, then Press 1. Dedicated support for veterans and service members.
- If someone is actively hurting themselves or has a plan to do so immediately, please call 911, contact your local tribal law enforcement, go to the nearest Indian Health Clinic or emergency room.



Open hearts, open conversations, saved lives.



If you have any questions, or would like to discuss this further please contact
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