



# Suicide Awareness



September is Suicide Awareness month. The topic of suicide is one that a lot of people try to avoid talking about, but is one that really needs to be discussed. It is my hope that we can be more open to having conversations about suicide.

## What are the signs to look for?

The American Association of Suicidology stated that some of the most common suicide warning signs include, but are not limited to:

- **Discussing death or suicide:** Frequently talking about death, dying, or suicide.
- **Feelings of hopelessness:** Feelings that nothing can ever be fixed no matter what they do.
- **Changes in behavior:** These changes might involve a person's daily routines, social interactions, habits, or overall demeanor. Significant changes that seem out of character for the person or that persist over time.
- **Self-isolation:** When a person starts withdrawing from friends, family, or activities they once loved. Self-isolation can also lead to increased feelings of loneliness, hopelessness, and despair, all of which can contribute to suicidal thoughts.
- **Making plans:** If someone begins giving away personal belongings or making arrangements for when they are gone, this can signal active suicidal thoughts. Other actions might include researching suicide methods, acquiring means to die by suicide, or scouting locations.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss this further please contact Cyndie Gilliam, LMFT, TANF Therapist @ 760-330-3913 or [cgilliam@sctca.net](mailto:cgilliam@sctca.net)



## How you can help

It can be hard to know what to do when someone is thinking about suicide. If you are concerned about someone who might be suicidal, here are several things you can do to help:

1. When somebody you know shows warning signs, ask them directly: "Are you thinking about killing yourself?"
2. Ask if they've thought about how they would do it and separate them from anything they could use to hurt themselves.
3. If someone is thinking about suicide, listen to their reasons for feeling hopeless and in pain. Listen with compassion and empathy without judgement.
4. Help them create a safety plan. The website <https://www.mysafetyplan.org> has a form that can be used.
5. Help them connect to additional support. Let them know they can **call or text 988**. They can reach out to a supportive family members, friends, faith-based leaders, coaches, co-workers, health care professionals or therapists. Dialing 211 is another way to find local resources. These resources can also help you to process your feelings.
6. Check in with the person you care about on a regular basis. Making contact with them in the days and weeks after a crisis can be a good support. Send a caring message. It could be a phone call, text, email, or even a letter.