

## RECOGNISE THE SIGNS

Look for changes in behaviour or phrases like:

- "I feel like there's no way out."
- "I don't matter anymore."
- Talking about death or wanting to end their life.
- Withdrawal from social interactions, mood swings, or using substances more frequently.

**These signs suggest that the person may need support and an open conversation.**

# Supporting Someone in Emotional Distress

## GUIDE APPROACH

### GREET

Approach them with warmth and calmly let them know you're there to listen. Saying, "I'm here for you" can help them feel understood and safe.

### UNDERSTAND

Listen without interrupting or offering solutions too soon. Allow them to share their feelings while you show empathy and care.

### INFORM

Reassure them that support is available. Gently say, "We can find someone to help," to remind them they're not alone in this.

### DIRECT

If they're open, assist them in contacting a mental health professional or helpline. Stay with them if it helps. If they mention specific plans, take immediate action.

### ENCOURAGE

Reinforce that seeking help is a positive step. Remind them, "It's okay to ask for support." Suggest small self-care activities they may enjoy.

BEYOND BLUE - CALL 1300 22 4636 - CHAT ONLINE BEYONDBLUE.ORG.AU

LIFELINE - CALL 13 11 14 - CHAT ONLINE AT LIFELINE.ORG.AU

## ASKING QUESTIONS

Use open questions to invite them to share more:

- "What's been going on for you?"
- "How can I support you right now?"

For more immediate safety concerns, ask direct questions:

- "Are you thinking about ending your life?" or
- "Do you have a plan?"

Asking these questions calmly can open the door for them to share more and guide you on how best to help.

## SAFETY PLAN

If the person has mentioned suicidal thoughts, you can help them create a safety plan to ensure their immediate safety:

- **Focus on what they should do, not what they shouldn't:** Help them outline actions they can take when they feel unsafe (e.g., calling a helpline, reaching out to a trusted person).
- **Be clear:** The plan should specify who they can call and what steps to take in moments of crisis.
- **Short-term goals:** Keep the plan simple and for a manageable period, so they feel they can meet those goals and have a sense of achievement.

Include contact numbers for helplines, friends, or professionals they can call if they're feeling suicidal.

## KEY THINGS TO REMEMBER

- 1** Be a calm, steady presence. Your support may help reduce their distress.
- 2** Focus on listening rather than giving advice. Showing empathy is often more helpful in the moment.
- 3** Encourage them to reach out for professional help while respecting their space.

