

# CONVERSATION STARTERS

Asking about suicide saves lives but it can be hard to know where to start or how to help.

Below are some example conversation starters if you are worried about someone.

It can be scary, hard or painful to talk about suicide – but we need to. Suicidal feelings don't have to end in suicide. Many young people feel really isolated with their thoughts of suicide and do not feel that they are able to tell anyone. Evidence shows that talking about suicide does not make it more likely to happen – it reduces the stigma and is often the first step in a person's recovery.

**Talking about suicide does not make it more likely to happen.**

**Ask them directly 'Are you thinking about suicide?' By using the word suicide, you are telling the young person that it's OK to talk openly about their thoughts of suicide with you.**

"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?"

**If someone is suicidal, listen to them and allow them to express their feelings. They may feel a huge sense of relief that someone is willing to hear their darkest thoughts.**

"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."

**Reassure them that they are not alone and you can 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 HOPELineUK. 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"

Suicide is the biggest killer of young people—male and female—under 35 in the UK. We believe that everyone has a role to play in preventing young suicide. We need to work towards a community where suicide is no longer taboo and young people feel able to tell someone if they feel suicidal and ask for help.