



Everyone has a role to play in preventing suicide

Life can be hard, and it's normal to feel down or depressed. Depression and thoughts of suicide can affect people of all races, ages, incomes, religions, and cultures. You can save a life by knowing how to recognize and help someone who is thinking of suicide.

How to know if someone is struggling

Many people who are thinking about suicide will show "warning signs." Use the acronym FACTS when looking for warning signs:

- **F**eelings (sadness, anxiety, hopelessness, being a burden to others)
- **A**cting out or in more reckless ways
- **C**hanges in behavior
- **T**hreatening or directly **T**alking about suicide
- **S**ituations (breakup, job loss, financial troubles)

Though not everyone with these warning signs is at risk for suicide, it is important

to look out for these signs when you think someone may be struggling.

If you notice someone is struggling, take these simple steps to provide support:

- Ask them how they are feeling and actively listen to what they have to say.
- Help them think of ways to cope with their feelings (consider a Safety Plan, see next page).
- Encourage them to seek professional support and access resources.
- Continue to check in to make sure they get the help they need.

Using the information in this brochure can help you recognize when someone is struggling and give you the confidence to connect them with the help they need.

How to find help

It's important to know what resources are available – both in your community and virtually – so you are prepared to support someone who is having thoughts of suicide. The resources below can be accessed directly by someone who is struggling, by you on their behalf, or even by you as a source of guidance as you help your friend or loved one.

• North Dakota resources

- ▷ **FirstLink:** <https://myfirstlink.org/>
- ▷ **North Dakota Mental Health Program Directory:** <https://www.hhs.nd.gov/behavioral-health/find-services>

• National resources

- ▷ **988 Lifeline:** Call or text 988.
 - ◆ **Native and Strong Lifeline:** Dial 988, press 4 to speak with an Indigenous counselor.
 - ◆ **Veterans Crisis Line:** Dial 988, press 1.
- ▷ **Native Crisis Text Line:** Text NATIVE to 741-741.

- ▷ **Safety Plan App:** Download in App Store or Google Play, [mobile.va.gov/app/safety-plan](https://www.va.gov/app/safety-plan)
 - ◆ This free app helps you create a personalized plan with a friend or loved one to help keep them safe during a crisis.
 - ◆ Note: If your friend or loved one is already connected with a healthcare provider, they should complete this safety plan with their provider.
 - ◆ **If they are having active thoughts of suicide, please dial 911 or go to the nearest Emergency Department.**



For these resources and more, visit ndhopes.com/resources.

How to keep yourself and your loved ones safe

While some people think about suicide for weeks, months, or even years before acting on their thoughts, many people attempt suicide shortly after experiencing a crisis. It is important to reduce access to anything in a person's environment that they could use to hurt themselves.

There are different methods that people use to attempt suicide, but in North Dakota, firearms are most common.

Did you know?

- In North Dakota, nearly 3 in 5 suicides are by firearm.
 - ▷ 84% of firearm deaths are suicides.
- Firearms are very lethal (90% of suicide attempts by firearm end in death).
- Leaving firearms unlocked and loaded increases risk of suicide.

Consider the following steps to improve firearm safety

- Store firearms unloaded, locked, and secured.
 - ▷ Consider a cable or trigger lock, or a gun safe.
- Store the key to the gun lock and ammunition separately from the firearm.
- Temporarily store firearms away from the home during times of high stress.
 - ▷ Enlist the help of a trusted friend, family member, or colleague to remove firearms.

To learn about and access the 8-minute online Suicide Prevention and the Secure Storage of Firearms: Conversations for Everyone training, visit: <https://learn.psycharmor.org/courses/suicide-prevention-and-the-safe-storage-of-firearms-conversations-for-everyone>. If you are a gun shop or range owner and want to know more about the unique role you can play in preventing suicide, email info@ndhopes.com.

Sources: • AFSP. (n.d.). An introduction to firearms and suicide prevention. <https://afsp.org/an-introduction-to-firearms-and-suicide-prevention/> • The Educational Fund to Stop Gun Violence. (2021). North Dakota. <https://preventfirearmsuicide.efsgv.org/states/north-dakota/> • The Educational Fund to Stop Gun Violence. (2020). Lethal means safety counseling. <https://efsgv.org/learn/policies/lethal-means-safety-counseling/> • Everytown for Gun Safety. (2019). Gun violence in North Dakota. <https://everystat.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Gun-Violence-in-North-Dakota-1.pdf> • National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention. (2020). Lethal means. <https://theactionalliance.org/our-strategy/lethal-means>

Ways to be safe from other lethal means

- Prescription medication and pills
 - ▷ Give to a parent, caregiver, or trusted person to lock up safely or bring to a pharmacy or police department for disposal.
- Ropes
 - ▷ Remove these from the home during periods of increased risk.
- Sharp objects (razors, knives, scissors, etc.)
 - ▷ Remove from the daily environment; ask for help from a family member or significant other to supervise use of sharp objects.

Tips for discussing lethal means safety

- Be direct, empathetic, and respectful.
- Emphasize your desire to keep the person safe.
- Directly ask about firearms and any intent to buy firearms.
- Explain how easy access to lethal means increases suicide risk.
- Discuss available options for safe storage of lethal means.
- Emphasize that these actions are temporary.
- Explore barriers to safer storage options.

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ND HOPES provides programs, resources, and supports for North Dakota residents and tailored programming for rural communities, veterans, and youth to help prevent suicide.

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