

Here's How You Can Help Prevent Suicide

Note: This is Part 1 of a two-part article. Watch for Part 2 soon.

Suicide. The statistics worldwide are increasing annually. Your life may have been touched by a suicide or you may be fearful for a loved one, maybe even your son or daughter.

When you see warning signs or notice clues (see this post), you may be shocked and paralyzed with panic. But there's something you can do. You could help prevent a suicide from occurring.

Yes, you.

Anyone can. How? By learning the QPR steps.

What is the No. 1 cause of suicide?

Untreated depression.

When discovered, depression is highly treatable. Complicating factors develop when a person seeks relief by self-medicating with alcohol (a depressant) or drugs, which many people do. As odd as it sounds, research shows that "once someone decides to end their life, the hours before death are often filled with a kind of chipperness, even blissful calm. This change in mood is a good time to apply QPR."

Who Needs to Know QPR?

Everyone.

Not just concerned parents. I encourage you to share the following information with your friends. Spread the word and help save lives.

An overview of the three steps of QPR:

Question – the person about suicide.

Persuade – the person to get help.

Refer – the person to the appropriate resource.

The first step, asking “the question,” requires a lot of courage.

The First Step: Question

If you can’t bring yourself to do ask “the question”, find someone who can. If in doubt, don’t wait, don’t delay. QPR works because it’s designed to *interrupt the terrible journey* from thinking about suicide to acting on it.

According to Dr. Quinett, creator of QPR, the warning signs described in my last blog are often given during the week preceding an attempt. Therefore, it’s vital to overcome reluctance to follow this process as soon as you see any red flags.

How to Question

Plan a time and place to ask the “S” question. Try to have some privacy and be alone with the person. It may take up to an hour, so allow yourself time. Many people who have just been asked this question need to talk. Having good listening skills will be a huge plus. Don’t be too quick to fix them, just listen and empathize. They need to be heard and know that someone cares.

First, acknowledge the person’s distress: “Have you been unhappy lately? Have you been so very unhappy you wished you were dead?”

Or: “Do you ever wish you could go to sleep and never wake up?”

Or: “You know, when people are as upset as you seem to be, they sometimes wish they were dead. I’m wondering if you’re feeling that way, too?”

If you’re still not sure, then be more direct:

“Have you ever wanted to stop living?”

Or: You look pretty miserable. Are you thinking of killing yourself?”

Or: “I’m wondering if you are thinking about suicide?”

If these don’t sound like you, then rephrase the question to what works for you. Practicing helps. If someone just said something to you in a conversation that alarms you like, “I can’t take it anymore” or “I’m done,” you could ask them the question immediately (in private): “What you just said concerns me. Are you thinking of killing yourself?”

The Most Important Step

Asking the question is the most important step in QPR. It’s definitely the hardest, but the most helpful.

Once you ask the question, if they say yes, go on to the next step: persuade.

Remember, just being asked the question brings relief, not distress, contrary to what you may have thought.

Positive Results

Dr. Quinnet’s research has shown that with QPR, a person’s anxiety decreases and their hope increases.

In my next post, I’ll explain the next two steps of QPR, Persuade and Refer. You can read more about them on their website:

If you’re troubled about your loved one today, I hope this

Bible verse brings comfort:

"The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath you are the everlasting arms" (Deut. 33:27).

Recommended book: *Grieving a Suicide* by Albert Hsu

Immediate access to help is always available by calling 911 or the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 800-273-8255 (24/7 including holidays). {eo}

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