Tools for:

- Recognizing Suicide Risk
- Dealing with suicidal thoughts or behavior
- Giving or getting appropriate help

**Safety Guidelines**

**Call 911 IMMEDIATELY:**
- If on phone or online with someone who expresses intent to harm self or others
- If someone is threatening with a weapon or object that can be used as a weapon
- If someone mentions an overdose on pills or drugs or shows signs of a physical injury

In Montgomery County Call:

**MCES Crisis Center**

610-279-6100 (24/7)

Adapted collaboratively with permission from materials developed by:

Please visit www.mirecc.va.gov/visn19/ for Veteran and family resources

**Tips Using the ACE Card**

**Ask**

If someone is suicidal it is helpful to:
- Interact in a way that shows concern
- Try to talk about the subject directly

The most difficult step is asking:
- Say: You look upset. Have you thought of hurting yourself?
- Do you wish you were dead?

*Always ask when you think someone may be a danger to him or her self.*

**Care**

- Show that you are not judging what he or she is thinking or feeling
- Actively listen to what they say
- Encourage her or him to keep talking
- Accept that their situation is serious

**Engage**

Do all you can to get her or him to seek help
- Say that professionals are available to help
- Suggest that treatment might help
- Urge the person to get help even if past efforts did not yield results desired
Recognize Suicide Warning Signs

Some Danger Signs

- Thoughts of hurting or killing self
- Voicing a plan to kill self
- Seeking pills, weapons, other means
- Talking or writing about death, dying or suicide
- Seeing self as burden to others
- Believing others would be better off if you were dead

What You Should Know About Suicide

Asking about suicide does not create suicidal thoughts or behavior

- Asking may give the person permission to talk about thoughts or feelings

Many who die by suicide have communicated some intent, wish or desire to kill themselves

- Talking about suicide gives a chance to intervene before suicidal behaviors occur

Suicidal ideas may be linked with treatable conditions (e.g., mental illness, substance use, traumatic brain injury, etc.)

- Treatment can reduce risk and save a life
- Helping with the immediate crisis so that the person can seek help is vital

Suicidal thinking can overwhelm even the strongest, most rational person

- Protective factors may not keep the person safe during periods of crisis

Anyone experiencing serious suicidal thoughts should be referred to a mental health provider who can evaluate her/his condition and provide treatment as appropriate.

Additional Warning Signs

Professional help is needed when:

- Inability to sleep or sleeping all the time
- Withdrawing from friends, family
- Acting recklessly/risky behavior
- Rage, anger, seeking revenge
- Avoiding things, reliving past experiences
- Anxiety, agitation
- Dramatic changes in mood
- No reason for living or purpose in life
- Feeling hopeless or trapped, having no way out

These are some reasons to live that can deter suicidal behavior:

- Family, friends, social supports, close relationships, pets, battle buddy
- Good coping/problem solving skills
- Ongoing health and mental health care
- Beliefs that support life and living
- Activities that give life meaning

Protection Factors

- Family, friends, social supports, close relationships, pets, battle buddy
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- Ongoing health and mental health care
- Beliefs that support life and living
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