



## SUICIDE PREVENTION RESOURCES

### ***What To Do if Your Child is Having a Mental Health Crisis***

Hearing your child say they want to die or don't want to live can feel like the ground drops out from under you. How you respond in those first moments matters—not perfect words, but your steady presence. Here's how to navigate it step by step:

#### **1. Assess: Is your child in immediate danger?**

If **YES**, then Call 911 and clearly state it is a mental health emergency. Ask for responders trained in crisis intervention, if available.

If **NO**, then proceed to Step 2

#### **2. Anchor Yourself (Self-Regulate)**

Pause before reacting. Plant your feet, slow your exhale, soften your shoulders. Your steadiness signals safety even when you feel shaken inside.

#### **3. Thank Them for Telling You**

Say something like, "I'm really glad you told me—thank you for trusting me." This reassurance shows them their honesty is met with care, not confusion, frustration, or panic.

#### **4. Listen Without Minimizing**

Resist the urge to "talk them out of it" or reassure too quickly. Instead, reflect what you hear: "That sounds really heavy. Can you say more?" Simple validation helps them feel seen, not judged.

#### **5. Ask Directly About Risk**

Gentle but clear questions provide clarity, "Have you thought about how you would hurt yourself? Do you have a plan?" Research shows asking does not increase risk; it helps you understand the seriousness of the situation.

## 6. Connect with Professional Help

If you need support right away, call or text [988](#) to connect with the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline 24/7. 988 is also really good at talking directly with youth. In Georgia: You can also call GCAL (1-800-715-4225) for mobile crisis teams and referrals to local services.

If you live in Georgia, and it is within the hours of 11am–6pm Mon–Thurs or 11am–5pm on Fri, you can contact [Urgent Psych](#) to have your child seen by a psychiatrist right away (in-person or via Telehealth).

If you don't immediate support, reach out to your child's therapist, psychiatrist, or pediatrician and make an appointment ASAP.

## 7. Support Safety and Connection in the Meantime

While waiting to connect with a professional, stay close and do not leave them alone. Work together on a short-term plan for staying safe. Ask your child what helps when thoughts and feelings related to suicide get overwhelming—list a few coping tools, safe distractions, or people they trust to talk to.

Check in regularly: “How are you feeling right now?” This isn't about solving everything—it's about getting through safely until more support is in place.

Reassure them you'll face this together: “You don't have to go through this alone—we'll figure it out side by side.” Plan ongoing check-ins rather than treating this as a one-time talk.

## 8. Care for Yourself Afterward

Your nervous system may feel wrung out. That means you did something hard and important. Lean on your supports, take a walk, breathe, or debrief with a trusted friend or counselor. Receiving co-regulation strengthens your ability to keep showing up.

### Create a Safety Plan With Professional Support

If your child has expressed suicidal thoughts, ask their therapist or psychiatrist about creating a documented [Safety Plan](#) together, which lays out what your child can do, who they can reach out to, and how you can support them when experiencing suicidal ideation.

Bringing a professional into the process ensures the plan is personalized, realistic, and developmentally appropriate. As a parent, you can reinforce it at home by keeping copies accessible, practicing coping skills during calm moments, and revisiting the plan after transitions or stressful events.

