

HOW TO HELP SOMEONE WHO'S THINKING ABOUT SUICIDE

DOS

TALK OPENLY

It's the only way you can find out how serious the person is about ending his or her life. Ask questions - "Are you considering suicide?" "Do you have a plan?" "Will you talk with someone who can help?"

BE A GOOD LISTENER

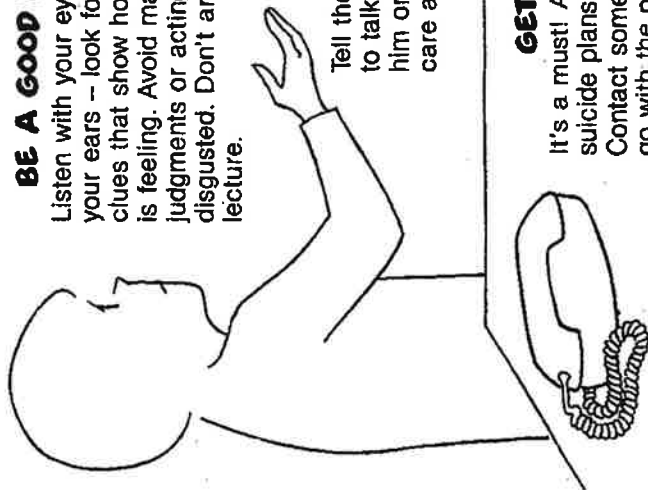
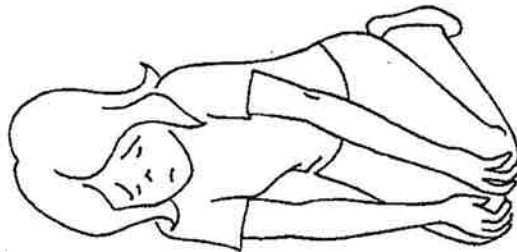
Listen with your eyes as well as your ears - look for nonverbal clues that show how the person is feeling. Avoid making moral judgments or acting shocked or disgusted. Don't argue or lecture.

SHOW THAT YOU CARE

Tell the person that you're always willing to talk about things that may be troubling him or her. Reassure the person that you care and that others do, too.

GET PROFESSIONAL HELP

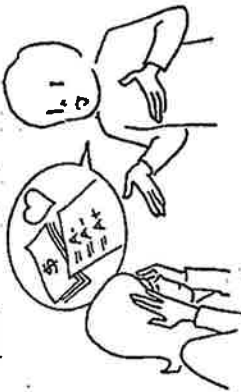
It's a must! And the more detailed the person's suicide plans, the more quickly you must act. Contact someone who can help, and offer to go with the person to that source of help. (See p.14 for a list of sources.)



DON'Ts

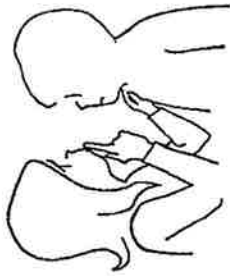
DON'T SIDESTEP THE ISSUE

Avoid offering "empty" reassurances, such as "You have it a lot better than most people." Instead, assure the person that he or she can be helped.



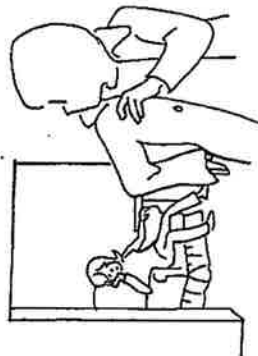
DON'T KEEP WHAT YOU KNOW A SECRET

While friends should be able to confide in one another, don't keep a secret if a friend's life is in danger. Tell an adult you trust.



DON'T LEAVE THE PERSON ALONE

Contact someone who can help, and wait until that help arrives.



DON'T FEEL RESPONSIBLE FOR SAVING THE PERSON

You can help a person by showing that you care and by helping him or her to get professional help. But you can't control what the person decides to do.

