

Feelings of Suicide

For all of us, there are times when problems seem overwhelming and the world looks bleak. A marriage or relationship may be ending; we may be having money problems; we may hate our jobs; or we may have chronic pain or some other serious illness.

When things get to be too much, many people have passing thoughts of wanting to die. It's normal to have these thoughts from time to time, but if they become so frequent and serious that you or someone you know is actually making suicide plans, it's important to respond.

Usually, there are warning signs that someone is thinking of committing suicide. Up to 80 percent of people who actually do kill themselves have mentioned their intentions to someone. These intentions may also become evident by observing the person's choice of reading material, writing, or even through a drawing. Other signs that someone is suicidal include giving away prized possessions and becoming socially isolated. Sometimes, after having been depressed for a while, the person will seem to make a dramatic turn-around, as if he or she is no longer unhappy or upset. The person may seem to be more energetic and to have finally resolved the problem. Unfortunately, this outward disguise is often times the result of having finally resolved to commit suicide. Finally, if someone has tried to commit suicide before, that person is more likely to try again. If you or someone you know has any of these signs, don't ignore them.

Anyone who is suicidal needs to contact their local psychiatry department, or a county-approved crisis hotline. It is not enough to say that they should have someone with them until the crisis passes. If you have a friend who you think is suicidal, offer to stay with them. Show that you understand their feelings and care about them living. If you're feeling suicidal yourself, ask someone you trust to stay with you, and talk about how you feel. If you are alone and the situation is life-threatening, dial 911 or other emergency services. *If it's more a matter of needing someone to talk to, call the Psychiatry Department at your local Kaiser Permanente facility; twenty-four hour emergency services are available.

If you or someone is in crisis, seek professional help immediately in order to deal with the underlying issues that led to the crisis. Again, a good place to start would be to call the Psychiatry Department at your local Kaiser Permanente facility to set up an appointment. Your treatment may consist of psychotherapy, antidepressant medication, or both.



Other resources

- ❖ Connect to our Web site at members.kp.org to access health and drug encyclopedias, interactive programs, message boards, health classes, and much more.
- ❖ Check your *Kaiser Permanente Healthwise Handbook*.
- ❖ Contact your Kaiser Permanente Health Education Department or Center.
- ❖ Listen to recorded messages on the Kaiser Permanente Healthphone (1-800-332-7563; TTY: 1-800-777-9059). Request a *Healthphone Directory* from Health Education or download a copy at members.kp.org. (Search “Healthphone”.)

This information is not intended to diagnose health problems or to take the place of medical advice or care you receive from your physician or other medical professional. If you have persistent health problems, or if you have additional questions, please consult your doctor.

- * If you have an emergency medical condition, call 911 or go to the nearest hospital. When you have an emergency medical condition, we cover emergency care from Plan providers and non-Plan providers anywhere in the world.

An emergency medical condition is (1) a medical or psychiatric condition that manifests itself by acute symptoms of sufficient severity (including severe pain) such that you could reasonably expect the absence of immediate medical attention to result in serious jeopardy to your health or serious impairment or dysfunction of your bodily functions or organs; or, (2) when you are in active labor and there isn't enough time for safe transfer to a Plan hospital before delivery, or if transfer poses a threat to you or your unborn child's health and safety.