



**American
Foundation
for Suicide
Prevention**

When a loved one has made a suicide attempt

When someone you love attempts to take their life, it can evoke a range of strong emotions. During their crisis, your loved one may have perceived themselves as being completely alone, or a burden on you and the others who love them.

Acknowledge your own feelings

When someone you love attempts to take their life, it can evoke a range of strong emotions. You may feel angry, sad, or afraid. You may be anxious about your loved one's future. You may feel as though you, yourself, have experienced a trauma. It is important that you seek support and take steps to care for yourself.

Recovery is a process

“My loved one is home from the hospital. Does that mean they are better?”

Encourage your loved one to stay in counseling, and to communicate any thoughts of suicide to their treatment provider.

Be patient and gentle. Don't be discouraged by what may seem like setbacks or slow progress.

The recovery process is different for everyone. Recovery usually extends long beyond hospitalization, and will involve support from professionals, as well as friends and family. The first six months after a hospitalization are especially critical to the suicide attempt survivor's recovery, and the risk for suicide remains elevated for the entire first year.

Be with them

One of the most powerful gifts you can provide at this time is your presence. Even when you don't know what to say, just be there with them. For the first few weeks, they need you very close. Face to face is best, but there are so many ways to connect with technology – skype, phone, text, social media.

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A plan for recovery

Talk openly with your loved one. Ask them what they need, and help them create a good plan for their recovery.

If you are an iPhone or iPad user, download the [Stanley-Brown Safety Plan](#) for free from the App Store.

How you can help

- Encourage your loved one to talk to their therapist/counselor about developing a safety plan. You can find more information about safety planning through the [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#).
- Encourage them to engage in healthy eating and exercise, as well as regular sleep.
- Help identify ways to support their recovery, such as reducing their workload, allowing others to help them with daily responsibilities, and socializing with supportive people.
- Encourage them to engage in self-care and relaxation activities, such as meditation, spending time in nature, and listening to music that helps their mood.
- Ask the provider how you can help make their environment safer, and take action to reduce access to means, such as removing or safely storing firearms and medications.

Connection makes a difference!

