



Activity 8.4

Starting the Conversation

Objective:

- Participants will learn tips about starting potentially difficult check-in conversations with students who may be at risk of suicide.

Steps:

1. It is helpful to practice this exercise before trying it with a group. The slides list the directions:
 - a. Write one or two phrases/actions to:
 - i. Show you care.
 - ii. Ask the question about suicide.
 - iii. Assist someone to get help and name two resources.
2. Read the slide and allow time for participants to follow directions.
3. Direct participants to respond to each question with one answer, making sure to respond to all three steps. If there is time they can return and generate additional responses for each number.
4. After about 5 minutes, ask participants to share what they wrote with each other in pairs or very small groups.
5. After two minutes, ask for volunteers to share their ideas with the entire group. Take one step at a time as follows:
 - a. Say: “All of us ‘show we care’ in different ways (verbal and non-verbal)... and we trust that you will genuinely express caring/concern. Let’s share a few of the ways...”
 - b. Then ask, “How would you ‘ask about suicide?’ Collect several different responses. (Remember there are no right or wrong answers.)
 - c. And finally, “How would you try to assist someone to get help?” Again, quickly sample your audience. “And where might you turn for help?”
6. Each step of the way you and your audience are working together to reinforce the helpful steps and, therefore, increase their comfort level in dealing with students potentially at risk of suicide.