



HELP A FRIEND IN NEED

Facebook is proud to work with Kids Help Phone, a charity that provides anonymous and confidential professional counselling to young people in Canada, to share potential warning signs that a friend might be in emotional distress and need your help. This guide was originally created in partnership with The Jed Foundation and The Clinton Foundation.



POSSIBLE WARNING SIGNS OF EMOTIONAL DISTRESS



If you see someone posting distressing messages or content on Facebook or behaving dramatically different than usual, it may signal that this person needs help. **If you have a gut feeling that something is not right, you should act on it.**

Be aware of status updates, posts, messages, photos or videos that include the following themes:

- **Talking about feeling alone, hopeless, isolated, useless, or being a burden to others:** “I feel like I’m in a black hole”; “I don’t want to get out of bed... ever”; “Leave me alone”; “I can’t do anything right”
- **Showing irritability and hostility that is out of character:** “I hate everyone”; “F*@K the world”
- **Showing impulsive behaviours:** Like driving recklessly or

a significant increase in substance use.

- **Insomnia posts:** “3am again and no sleep”
- **Withdrawal from everyday activities:** “Missed another chem lab – I’m such a waste”; “Another day in bed under the covers”
- **Use of Negative Emoticons:** Repeatedly using emoticons that describe feeling:



SAD



GUILTY



DOWN



LOST



IRRITATED



BAD



ALONE



DEPRESSED



TRUST YOUR INSTINCTS

If you see someone posting messages, photos, videos or links that suggest the person is in emotional distress, you should reach out and assist them to get the help they may need.

I can’t handle any of this 😞

TIPS FROM FACEBOOK AND KIDS HELP PHONE



“I’ve noticed you haven’t been yourself lately. Are you okay?”

HOW TO HELP A FRIEND IN NEED

If you have a friend who seems to be struggling with an issue that may be more serious than they can handle, there is a lot that you can do to support them.

Reach out, let them know they are **not alone** in feeling this way and that **it’s ok to ask for help**. Be clear and direct, and **do not use hints such as using the “Like” button or replying with an emoticon, as these could be misinterpreted by the person you’re trying to help**.

Understanding that it can be tough to start this conversation, here are some suggestions:

- “I’m worried about you because you seem...” (e.g., sad, withdrawn, etc).
 - Have examples ready such as, “It concerned me when you said...” **Be specific** about what you noticed.

- “Do you want to talk about it?”; “What can I do to help?”
 - If they say no, then you might say: “It’s okay if you don’t want to talk to me, but it is important that you talk to someone.”
- Offer to help them connect with a school counselling service or health centre, spiritual leader, or other mental health services.
- Reach out to Kids Help Phone if you ever need to talk about helping yourself or a friend – it’s a 24/7 anonymous and confidential professional counselling service.

Never be afraid to give your friend a call, pay a visit, or send them a Facebook message to let them know you are concerned, and offer to help connect them with any extra support needed.



Post Photo

No one would care if I were gone

Post

WARNING SIGNS THAT SOMEONE MAY NEED URGENT HELP OR MAY BE AT RISK OF SUICIDE

While it can be hard, particularly online, to know if someone is exaggerating, being sarcastic or being serious, **if someone threatens to take their own life, you should always take them seriously**.

Here are some examples of things someone at risk of suicide might say:

- **Talking about suicide or wanting to die:** “I want out”; “Everyone would be better off without me”; “There’s no reason to live”

- **Intense and urgent emotional despair or intense guilt or shame, feeling trapped:** “I can’t take it [the pain] anymore”; “There is no way out”; “I’m done”; “I’m so sorry for all the trouble I’ve caused everyone”
- **Showing rage or seeking revenge:** “I’ll show you all”; “She’ll be sorry”
- **Saying goodbyes, giving away personal possessions:** “I’ll miss you all”; “You won’t have to worry about me anymore”
- **Glorifying or glamorizing death, or making death seem heroic:** “Death is beautiful”
- **Asking where/how to get potentially lethal means,** like access to pills or weapons



Kids Help Phone

1-800-668-6868

Kidshelpphone.ca

HOW TO HELP A FRIEND IN URGENT NEED OR WHO MAY BE AT RISK OF SUICIDE

1. If someone is threatening their own life or someone else's life, this is an emergency. You should bring your friend to the Emergency Room or call 911 or school emergency services **immediately**. If it's safe to do so, stay with that person or do what you can to contact them or find someone to stay with them until help arrives.
2. You can use the following national services any time:

Kids Help Phone

1-800-668-6868

Kidshelpphone.ca

OR

Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention

Suicideprevention.ca to find a crisis centre close to you.

3. You can also report someone who may be suicidal to Facebook directly: **but** if the person has made an explicit threat of suicide, you should call 911 or a suicide hotline immediately.

REMEMBER TO:

- Listen without judgment, assumptions, or interruptions. Let them know that you believe what they are saying and take them seriously.
- Know your limits and do not place yourself in physical danger – the best way to help is to connect your friend to a mental health professional.
- If you are supporting a friend who may be suicidal, you likely can benefit from support as well – reach out to your own supports or connect with a professional.

*No matter what, you shouldn't be embarrassed or worried about offending or upsetting your friend. Helping your friend may take some courage, but it is **always worth the effort to support their health and safety.***

BROUGHT TO YOU BY:



This guide, while evidence based, is for informational and educational purposes only and is not intended to constitute medical advice or be a substitute for professional diagnosis and treatment.