How to Help a Friend Struggling with Suicidal Thoughts

1. Make sure you know the signs and symptoms of suicide. By recognizing parasuicidal behavior, you may be able to save someone’s life and be better prepared to recognize it in the future.

2. Take any threat of suicide seriously; suicide crosses all cultural and ethnic barriers and should always be seen as a cry for help.

3. Be receptive of the suicidal person’s feelings. Many individuals that are thinking about killing themselves feel rejected by their peers and society. By being argumentative and confrontational, you are only strengthening their convictions and confirming their beliefs that they have been rejected. By opening yourself up to their feelings, the individual will realize they are not alone and that other people care about them.

4. When helping someone through their suicidal thoughts, ask direct questions that do not evade the issue and do not provide false assurances. When asking questions, make sure they are as direct as possible and not leading to the answer you would like to hear. Leading questions can make it seem like you are rejecting the individual’s feelings.

5. The most important thing to remember is to always suggest the individual seek professional help from a psychologist or psychiatrist. You are most likely not a professional and will be unable to completely help the suicidal individual in the long run. The best thing you can do is to make sure they seek help from a professional and are safe.