

SKILLS FOR HELPING FRIENDS

When friends are sad or depressed, we often struggle with how to talk or relate to them. Below are a few suggestions to keep in mind when you find yourself in that position.

#1 LISTEN:

It is especially important to listen for feelings. We often jump to solve our friend's problem or give advice, when what they need most is an ear. When listening to a friend, trust yourself and take any mention of suicide seriously. Allow your friend the time and space to share how they are feeling.

#2 BE HONEST:

Be genuine and honest in your support and concern for your friend. Your honesty gives your friend permission to be honest too. Ask questions to help you understand how they are really feeling and what they plan to do.

#3 SHARE FEELINGS:

We have all been sad, lonely or depressed before. Remember how you felt during those times and talk about those feelings. When we are depressed, we often become obsessed with our own problems and fail to offer much support to our friends. Do your best to stick by your friend.

#4 GET HELP:

The hardest, but most important step in helping a friend is asking for help. Our friends often ask us not to tell anyone about their suicidal thoughts. However, if your friend is talking about suicide, HELP is needed. Though you may feel badly about breaking a promise, BETTER TO HAVE AN ANGRY FRIEND THAN A DEAD ONE.

Web Sites for Mental Health Issues:

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services; Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA): Know the warning signs in young people

<http://family.samhsa.gov/get/suicidewarn.aspx>

Suicide and Mental Health Association International: SMHAI is dedicated to suicide and mental health related issues. Our main goal is to prevent suicidal behavior and to relieve its effects on all who may be affected by it.

<http://suicideandmentalhealthassociationinternational.org/suiconclust.html>

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:

<http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org>

Local Agencies that can assist:

6 th Street Drop in Center for Youth	894-8008
Butte County Behavioral Health, Children's Services	891-2945
Butte County Public Health	891-2731
Catalyst Women's Advocates	343-7711
24 Hour Crisis Line	895-8476
Chico Community Counseling	891-2945
Paradise office	872-6328
Enloe Behavioral Health	332-5250
Homeless Emergency Runaway Effort (HERE)	1 800 371-4373 891-2794
Rape Crisis Center	342-7273
Shalom Free Clinic	518-8300
Skyway House Adolescent Care	898-8326