

Worried About Someone - Suicide

Suicide is a difficult topic to talk about. Especially with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples past experiences and lived experiences within colonisation impacting on our mob has the weight of trauma connected. This trauma can be talked about as intergenerational trauma, generational trauma, and direct trauma from our experiences.

Mob can experience feelings of unbearable emotional pain through:

- feeling alone,
- loss of loved ones and grief,
- living off country,
- loss of language,
- removed from family,
- unemployment,
- relationship troubles,
- financial issues
- Social exclusion



Recognising any signs struggle and understanding how to help a loved one can be an important part of supporting our mob.

This fact sheet is to help you with the challenging conversations about suicide for our mob is a big issue. Our people experience a higher rate of suicide compared to our non-Indigenous brothers and sisters.

These rates show us how much we have been troubled by being taken disconnected from culture, off country, not being able to practice culture, and intergenerational trauma.

However, suicide is not a part of our culture. Our personal, families, and communities strengths, resilience, and cultural practices are useful in responding to our mob in crisis. Using our Indigenous knowledge of practices of healing, can give us hope for recovery and healing.



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"Our Story, Our Healing"

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SAFE YARNS & STIGMA

How to start a yarn: If you notice mob has changed in their behaviour, it's important to yarn about it. Speak directly to the person non-judgementally with empathy and respect.

For example if you have reason to think they might be thinking about suicide, it's important to ask questions such as, "Are you thinking of ending your life?" or "Have you thought about taking you own life - Now or in the past?" rather than not talking to them.

Talking about suicide will create conversation and awareness. For information about suicide and supports please talk with a health professional such as a Doctor, Nurse, Mental Health Workers, Aboriginal Health workers, School teachers, family, friends, and community members.

SHAME, STIGMA, AND SUICIDE MYTHS:

Create a non-judgmental environment for these yarns. Let them know that their feelings are valid. Let them know they are important to you.

Suicide can be labelled weak and cowardly. Think about how we yarn to our mob with kindness and respect.

Yarning about suicide will not cause a person to suicide. Yarning allows for awareness and information sharing.

Discuss any comments they've made that have made you worried, like "I wish I was dead," or "I just can't take it anymore," make it clear that you have heard them, and you are there for them.

DIRECTLY ASKING ABOUT SUICIDE & PRACTISING PATIENT LISTENING

Asking Directly About Suicide: It can be challenging to ask someone if they're thinking about suicide, but it's crucial for their safety.

Avoid saying things like, "You are not thinking of doing something silly, are you?".

This can make them feel shamed or judged. Instead, let them know you can sense the sadness in their spirit and are genuinely concerned about their wellbeing with questions like, "Have you been thinking about suicide?"

Practising Patient Listening: Offering a patient and understanding ear is one of the most meaningful things you can do. Although we may feel like we want to fix their problems, it is better to encourage people on their own personal wellbeing journey. Allow them to express their feelings and share their story in their own time. Let them know it's okay to feel the way they do.

CONNECTING TO HELP & BUILDING COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Connecting to Help: Encourage them to yarn with a trusted elder, or suggest contacting a crisis hotline such as 13YARN and seek professional help. If they are comfortable with it, take them to a health professional. Offer support to get them to hospital. If safety is a big concern, stay with them and let them know you will be calling the Ambulance because you are worried for your safety. Follow the instructions that emergency services tell you on the phone.

Building Community Support: Keeping a strong connection with mob and community can provide a sense of belonging and support during challenging times. Encourage your loved ones to reach out to trusted mob when they're struggling, letting them know that seeking help is brave and powerful action, not a weakness.

Additional Support: Lend a hand with daily tasks like baby sitting, cooking, or cleaning to reduce their stress.

Connecting to country and water through activity walking, riding a bike, hiking, fishing and hunting.

Suggest engaging in activities they enjoy, or introduce them to supportive mobile apps like *BeyondNow*, *Kurdiji*, and *iBobbly* that can provide additional emotional support.

The key takeaway here is to remind our mob they are strong.

Be there for your mob and don't be afraid to ask if they're thinking about suicide. It is okay to ask for help. As a community, we can work together to create a safe and supportive environment for our mob.



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