

# Recognizing and Responding to Suicide

Emergency One Page Document

## Suicide crisis resources:

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline number **988**  
New Mexico Crisis and Access Line (505) 662-7474  
UNM Psychiatric Emergency Services (505) 272-9038  
2600 Marble ABQ NM 87106



## DO Ask the Question:

“Are you thinking about killing yourself?” Or  
“Are you thinking about ending your life?”

Ask directly about suicide. Ask the question in such a way that is natural and flows over the course of the conversation. Ask the question in a way that gives you a “yes” or “no” answer. Don’t wait to ask the question when the person is halfway out the door. Asking directly and using the word “suicide” establishes that you and the at-risk person are talking about the same thing and lets them know you are not afraid to talk about it.

## DON'T Ask the Question:

“You’re not thinking about killing yourself,  
are you?”

Do not ask the question as though you are looking for a “no” answer. Asking the question in this manner tells the person that although you assume they are suicidal, you want and will accept a denial.

## VALIDATE the Person’s Experience:

- Talk openly
- Don’t panic
- Be willing to listen and allow emotional expression
- Recognize that the situation is serious
- Don’t pass judgment
- Reassure that help is available
- Don’t promise secrecy
- Don’t leave the person alone

## Get Help:

Share available resources with the person. Be willing to make the call or take part in the call to **988**. <https://www.fcc.gov/988> This toll-free confidential Lifeline is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week and is for suicidal crisis or mental health distress. Or call NMCAL **1-855-NMCRISIS (662-7474)**.

Let the person know that you or a designated helper (inform your leadership and follow protocol) are willing to go with them to see a professional when they are ready. If you feel the situation is critical, take the person to the closest Emergency Room or call **911**. Do not put yourself in danger; if at any time during the process you are concerned about your own safety, or that the person may harm others, call **911**. Never negotiate with a person who has a gun; call **911** and leave the area. If the person has done harm to him or herself in any way, call **911**. <https://www.ihs.gov/suicideprevention/howtotalk/>