safeTALK Suicide Alertness Workshop

**Key Points**

Why is suicide alertness important?

* Most people thinking of suicide want help to stay alive
* “Invitations,” or signals of suicidality, are often missed, dismissed, or avoided
* ANYONE can have thoughts of suicide, and ANYONE can learn how to help

What to do if someone you know may be at risk of suicide

* **TELL**
  + **Pay attention to “invitations,”** or signals that someone may be considering suicide
  + Actions may include carelessness, moodiness, withdrawal, andor alcohol & drug misuse
  + Language may include feelings of loneliness, burdening others, purposelessness, need to escape
  + Feelings may include desparation, hopelessness, numbmess, and/or shame
  + Life situations that may put people at risk include abuse, rejection, loss, or being a survivor of suicide
* **ASK**
  + Trust your intiution – it is always better to ask than to not
  + Ask openly and directly – **Are you thinking about suicide?**
  + Asking the difficult questions communicates acceptance and care
  + A few other good ways to start the question..
    - “I’m wondering if…”
    - “I have a feeling that…”
    - “I don’t know if this is what’s going on, but…”
* **LISTEN**
  + Your job is NOT to cheer them up, or convince them out of it
  + **Start the conversation with open-ended questions** like…
    - “How long have you been feeling this way?”
    - “What has led up to this?”
    - “What is this like for you?”
  + Remind them – “This is important.”
* **KEEPSAFE**
  + “We need to connect you with someone that can help keep you safe. I have an idea, do you have any?”
  + **Connect them with someone who can do a suicide intervention** – a great resource for this is our Suicide Prevention Hotline:
    - **1-877-663-5433**
  + Give them options – who calls, what to share, where to make the call
  + Remind them that their safety matters, and they deserve support
  + This is a WARM hand-off – do NOT leave them alone until both of you feel safe

Missing, Dismissing, or Avoiding “Invitations”

For many reasons, we may not respond to signs of suicidality. Pay attention if these come up for you.

* **MISS**
  + We don’t recognize the warning signs
  + We don’t connect with suicide, or consider the possibility
* **DISMISS**
  + We don’t take seriously
  + We assume suicidality looks a certain way
  + We think suicide rarely happens
* **AVOID**
  + We steer clear of the topic
  + We don’t know what to do
  + We don’t want to intefere
  + We have our own troubles

*Please note – these are non-comprehensive notes taken by a participant of the safeTALK program offered by Suicide Prevention Services of the Central Coast in November 2019. You can find out more about the program here:* [*https://www.sprc.org/resources-programs/suicide-alertness-everyone-safetalk*](https://www.sprc.org/resources-programs/suicide-alertness-everyone-safetalk)*. You can find out more about Suicide Prevention Services here:* [*https://fsa-cc.org/suicide-prevention-service/*](https://fsa-cc.org/suicide-prevention-service/)