



*"Integrity is choosing courage over comfort." Brené Brown; Dare to Lead*

Dear Mental Health Advocates,

It has been a little while since we've reached out! We hope that you've had a fun and healthy summer. But now it's time to get back to work. With September being National Suicide Prevention Month, there's no better time than now to continue our exploration of mental wellness.

Let's be honest, suicide is an uncomfortable thing to talk about. One reason could be our collective unease surrounding suicide, specifically the fear that comes with not knowing what to say or how to say it. But increasingly we're hearing that **having conversations about suicide is critical to prevention**. So today we're discussing the tools and resources you need to be courageous and confident when having those difficult conversations that could change someone's life.

The following [five steps](#) are recommended by mental health experts at [The National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention](#) and the [988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline](#) to use as a blueprint when talking to someone you're worried may be thinking about suicide.

**Ask directly and without judgment**, "Are you thinking about suicide?" This is where your courage really matters. Remember that asking will not cause them to take action or put the thought into their head. In fact, [research](#) shows the opposite to be true. Reaching out shows that you care, you've noticed, and you're available for support.

**Keep them safe.** If someone confirms that they are considering suicide, it is imperative to determine their current level of well-being. Calmly gather safety information including whether they've done anything to try to take their life prior to talking with you, whether they have a specific plan for suicide, and whether they have access to lethal means. [Help them remove objects that could be used to self-harm.](#)

In any case of imminent danger to self or others, call 911 immediately.

**Be present when listening** and be mindful of your follow-through. Really listen to their responses and assume they're legitimate. Try to highlight any [supportive factors](#) they might mention. Only offer support that you are willing and able to commit to.

Never agree to keep anyone's thoughts of suicide to yourself.

**Connect to a crisis resource** such as [988 Lifeline](#) or [similar service](#). Continue to provide support during their call and help them put together a list of resources with contact information. This could include supportive individuals in their lives, suicide prevention and crisis services, and [short-term counseling services like ERC](#).

**Stay in touch after your conversation.** Once you have helped link them with the professional services they need, circle back to check in and see how they're doing. Feeling connected to others is a main [protective factor](#) in suicide prevention.

Awareness is an important component of suicide prevention. You can continue to help make a difference by talking about safety, support, and resilience beyond this one month.

More Resources:

- Risk factors and warning signs: [Suicide Prevention Awareness - ERC \(ercincorp.com\)](#)
- Construction Suicide Prevention: [Construction Suicide Prevention - Home - Construction Suicide Prevention](#)

- Workplace Suicide Prevention: [Workplace Suicide Prevention | Make suicide prevention a health and safety priority at work](#)
- Men's Health Resources: [Man Therapy | Men's Mental Health Resources](#)
- American Foundation for Suicide Prevention: [Home | AFSP](#)

Sincerely,

The ERC Team