

# MYTHS ABOUT SUICIDE

Myths or misinformation about suicide, or the lack of information altogether, often means that desperate people can't get the help they need in times of crisis. Being well-informed about suicide can help you save your own life, or the life of someone you know or love!

## MYTH

**People who talk about suicide rarely actually do it.**

(This relates to the belief that people are just seeking attention or are bluffing.)

People who die by suicide often give a clue or warning of their intentions. The majority of people who attempt suicide say or do something to express their intention before they act. Always treat even subtle threats seriously.

## MYTH

**The suicidal person wants to die and there is nothing anyone can do about it.**

Often the suicidal person feels ambivalent about dying. People usually don't want to die; they rather want to end their horrible emotional pain. You can help by identifying the potentially suicidal person and talking to them about it.

## MYTH

**A person who has attempted suicide will always have thoughts of suicide.**

While a previous suicide attempt statistically increases the chance of another one, many people never attempt again. Often a suicide attempt is made during a particularly stressful period, or during periods of major depression. With intervention and support a person may cease feeling suicidal.

## MYTH

**If you ask a person directly, "Do you feel like killing yourself?" This will lead to a suicide attempt.**

Speaking to a person directly about suicidal intent will usually relieve the anxiety surrounding the feeling, and act as a deterrent to the suicidal behaviour. You don't create self-destructive feelings in another person simply by talking about suicide. If the thought was going to be there, it was there before you asked about it.

## MYTH

**A good job and stable relationships prevent people from contemplating suicide.**

People of all socio-economic and cultural backgrounds can feel suicidal. Although positive social connections are a major protective factor, biological, social, psychological, and spiritual risk factors do contribute as well.