

Making contact

„Hi, excuse me.
Do you have a minute?...”

„Sure, what is it?...”

Observing behavior

„I have noticed that you seem
distracted lately and haven't
been talking to me much...”

„I don't know exactly
what you mean...”

Share impressions and ask questions

„Correct me if I'm wrong, but it
seems you're not doing so well right
now. Is something wrong?...”

„Well, yes, I'm having a hard time
right now, but it's not so bad...”

„Well, I'm really
worried about you...”

„Hm... well,
it's like this...
and then...”

„I see... and then...
and now?”

Concrete support

„I really think you need profes-
sional help. Otherwise it's just
going to get worse. Can I give
you this address? Or would
you like me to call to make an
appointment for you?...”

„I'm not sure...”

1. Signs that could indicate someone is having a crisis or thinking of committing suicide

- Depressed mood, mood swings, loss of confidence
- Changes
 - in social interactions (withdrawal, superficial behavior)
 - in outward appearance and productivity
- Mentioning „leaving” and making concrete plans to go

2. Tips for discussing the problem

- Make contact
 - If you suspect a crisis: trust your instincts!
 - Talk to the person
- Share your observations and impressions
 - Use I-messages (for example, I have the feeling you aren't doing so well.)
 - Ask directly whether the person is thinking of suicide (Are you thinking about ending your life?)
- Offer real support
 - Make sure you know the limits of what you can realistically do (don't make promises)
 - Give them hope that they can get help (gain time)
 - Give them the address of a professional counselor (names, phone numbers)
 - Make definite plans for the next steps (I will call you the day after tomorrow. I will be curious to find out if you have already contacted the counselor.)
 - Inform the professionals you have recommended (psychologists, psychiatrists, doctors)

3. What makes someone an active observer?

- They are empathetic students or employees at UZH/ETH Zurich who are ready and willing to talk.
- They are observant and able to listen for signs of trouble.
- They can recommend a professional counselor to persons at risk.

4. Professional organizations:

- Psychological Counseling Services, phone 044 634 22 80, www.pbs.uzh.ch, www.pbs.ethz.ch
- Personnel and Organisational Development at ETH Zurich, www.ethz.ch/en/the-eth-zurich/working-teaching-and-research/personnel-development.html
- Psychiatrist in case of Emergency: 0800 33 66 55 (Ärztefon Zurich) University Hospital: 044 255 11 11 (Emergency Unit Zurich) Crises
- Hotline (Die Dargebotene Hand): 143 (German, French, Italian)