Stop. Make a Change.

Conversation Starter: Mental Health & Suicide

Be Prepared: If you are concerned about someone and are worried they may be thinking about taking their own life, it is a good idea to have supporting information to hand.

- Free 24/7 Support - Lighthouse Charity - click here.
- 24/7 Construction Industry Helpline - **0345 605 1956**
- Lighthouse Charity Live Web Chat - click here.
- Text Hardhat Support Service - Text HARDHAT to **85258**.
- Self-Support App - click here.
- Lighthouse Beacons - click here.

Find the right time and place: Think about when it would be a good time to talk - somewhere quiet and private. Maybe you could suggest going for a walk or drive or doing something you both enjoy.

Be Patient: It may take time for someone to open up. Allow for pauses and give them space to express themselves. Remember you will need to be there to support them, so make sure there aren't other things that may distract you or places you need to be. You need to reassure them that you are there to support them. Making sure they are calm and not under any negative influences is also important.

Be Sympathetic: It's important to make sure you are being sympathetic when talking to someone about mental health or suicide risk. You will need to try to see the situation from their point of view and understand their feelings. Starting the conversation could be difficult, so here are some conversation starters to help...

1. "You've seemed down lately. Do you want to talk?"
2. "I want you to know you can talk to me about anything."
3. "How are you?" - You may need to follow this up with "How are you, really?"
4. "I've noticed you don't seem yourself recently. Is everything okay?"
5. "I'm feeling really stressed at the minute. How are you doing?" - This reassures someone that everyone struggles from time to time. Sharing your struggles may help them open up, but make sure you don't just talk about you.
6. "You don't seem as happy as you usually are. I'd like to help if I can."
7. "I'm here for you, no matter what you're going through."
8. "Have you been having suicidal thoughts?" - It may seem scary to ask this question, but healthcare professionals recommend asking direct questions about suicide.

Follow Up: After your first chat, it's important that you check on their wellbeing. This means you can offer ongoing support and encouragement. Maybe you could go with them to an Andy's Man Club meeting or make time to meet up regularly to go for a walk and a chat. Knowing people care is important for anyone going through a difficult time.

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