



Question, persuade, refer when someone is suicidal

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In last week's column, we shared the myths and facts about suicide. Today we'll explore the first part, Question, of the QPR (Question, Persuade and Refer) educational course. QPR is not intended to be a form of counseling or treatment, but is intended to offer hope through positive action.

Basic concepts surround someone who is suicidal. These can include but are not limited to:

- Most suicidal people want to find a way to live
- Ambivalence (the desire to live) exists until the moment of death.
- Suicidal clues and warnings are real. The more clues and signs observed, the greater the risk.
- "The lethal triad." This term refers to three factors, that when all are present, can cause the risk of violence to one's self to be high. Factors include an upset person mixed with a combination of a "method" such as a firearm and either the use of drugs or alcohol.

The following are direct verbal clues that you should act upon to get help:

- "I've decided to kill myself."
- "I'm going to commit suicide."
- "I'm going to end it all."
- "If (such and such) doesn't happen, I'll kill myself."

Not all clues are direct. The following are examples of indirect clues:

- "I'm tired of life. I just can't go on."
- "My family would be better off without me."
- "Who cares if I'm dead anyway."
- "I just want out."

- "I won't be around much longer."
- "Pretty soon you won't have to worry about me."

Be sure to explore these indirect statements with the individual by asking questions to ensure that the person does not plan on hurting themselves and will be safe.

Asking a person if they are suicidal can be very hard and uncomfortable.

You may be asking yourself, "How do I ask someone if they are suicidal?" The easiest thing to remember is that if you are in doubt about a person's safety, don't wait, ask the question. Talk to the person alone in a private setting and allow the person to talk freely. Be sure to have resources handy, such as the person's immediate family member's phone number or an emergency number (such as a hospital's number or 911).

This month's articles are an abbreviated version of an educational course called QPR (Question, Persuade and Refer). We're offering a QPR community workshop in the Welborn Room at 410 Mulberry St. in Downtown Evansville on May 25 from 6 to 7 p.m. Please call (812) 436-4221 to register to attend.

This column was written by Rebecca R. Glines, Communications Manager for Southwestern Healthcare Inc. Contact the organization at (812) 436-4221 or comments@southwestern.org.