

# Talking to Your Kids about Suicide & Self Harm

By: Brandi Dahlman



**One of the most important ways to prevent suicide is to talk about it!**

**How to talk to your kids about suicide:**

- bring it up naturally
- talk in proactive terms. Ex. "It is important to know that there is help available if you ever feel this way."
- know that talking about it does not put ideas in their head
- be aware of how you are speaking about it as children pick up on our perception of things and perceive it differently than we mean.
- make sure there is no secrecy or shame around it
- listen and not argue
- be direct "Are you having thoughts of suicide or harming yourself in any way? Do you have any plans in mind to hurt yourself or attempt suicide?"
- know that people, including youth, do have passing thoughts of "it would be easier to not be here or I wish I could go to sleep forever, etc." Try not to let this panic you but have an open conversation about it. If these thoughts turn to a plan such as "I would hurt myself with a knife or gun" and the child has means and access to this, then this is a concern and professional help should be provided.
- if your child does not want to talk, always remind them that the invitation to talk is always open.
- know what supports are out there and inform your child of these
- always be in your child's corner and do not shame them for feeling this way
- talk to your child even when they are not feeling this way so that they are educated

**If your child is stating that they want to attempt suicide or has attempted:**

- Take your child to the closest emergency room
- call 911
- call the child's doctor and/or therapist
- get them connected to mental health support

**Supports available:**

**Primary Healthcare Counsellor (myself-Brandi Dahlman) - referral through your doctor or NP**

**Moose Jaw Mental Health Intake- 306-691-6464**

**Onlinetherapyuser.ca**

**Mobile Crisis Services- 306-757-0127**

Crisis Suicide Helpline- 306-525-5333

Kids Help Phone (24 hours) - 1-800-668-6868. Kidshelpphone.ca

The LifeLine App

thelifelinecanada.ca