

If I Reach Out, What Should I Say?

This is the question that stops more people than any other — so here's the secret: **you don't need the right words.** Crisis counselors, doctors, and therapists are trained to help you find them. But if a script helps, take one.

Calling or texting 988

- "I've been having suicidal thoughts and I don't know what to do."
- "I'm not in immediate danger, but I'm struggling and I need to talk."
- "I don't know how to start. Can you help me?"

That's it. You can also just say hello and cry. They've heard it. Silence is okay too — they will stay on the line.

Texting a friend or family member

- "I'm going through something heavy and I don't want to be alone with it. Can you talk?"
- "I haven't been okay lately. I don't need advice, I just need you to know."
- "This is hard to say: I've been thinking about suicide. I'm telling you because I need help."

Talking to a doctor or therapist

- "I've been having thoughts of suicide, and I want to be honest about that."
- "I've been using [alcohol/substances] to cope, and it's getting worse."
- "I wrote some things down because I was nervous I'd freeze." (Bringing notes is completely normal.)

If words fail entirely

Show them this page. Hand someone your phone with one of these sentences on the screen. That counts. That is reaching out.

The first sentence is the hardest one ever required of you. Every sentence after it is easier. Call or text 988 anytime — practice counts.

In crisis or struggling? Call or text 988 (Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, free, 24/7) · Chat at 988lifeline.org

Beyond September™ is an awareness and education initiative — not a medical, therapy, or crisis service. This guide is general education, not medical advice.

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