



10 Ways to 'Show Up' for Your Friend Who's Feeling Suicidal

EDITOR'S NOTE

If you experience suicidal thoughts, the following post could be potentially triggering. You can contact the [Crisis Text Line](#) by texting “START” to 741741.

If you have a friend who is dealing with suicidal thoughts, it's easy to feel powerless and as if there's nothing you can do for them. Fear not, there are plenty of ways to “show up” during your loved one's time of need.

People with suicidal thoughts need to be reaffirmed that their lives are significant and that they matter, simply because they are here, living and breathing. Maybe you feel lost about how to show support or overwhelmed from a text your suicidal friend sent to you explaining how dark and low they're feeling. While you are not a replacement for therapy, you can show up for your friend in ways that only you know how to.

To open up the conversation of how you can “show up” for your friend struggling with suicidal thoughts, we asked The Mighty community to tell us how they prefer to be shown support and love during times they're feeling suicidal.

Here's what they shared with us:

1. Text or Call Them

“Just text me. Keep me in the here and now. Remind me of things coming up. Like my niece and nephew's birthdays or holidays. It's hard to remember that the feeling will subside if I can push through it.” — Jessica W.

“It would help if family and so-called ‘friends’ would call or text first. Ninety-nine percent of the time I *never* hear from anyone unless I am the one reaching out.” — John M.

“Here’s a big one for me: If I reach out to you, it’s because I’m struggling. Don’t ignore my text because you don’t know how to respond! I get that you might not have professional words of wisdom, but that’s OK because you’re not my therapist. However, if you don’t reply at all, it solidifies my feelings of being a drain on everyone.” — Ruthann B.

2. Tell Them What They Mean to You

“Just tell me how I make their life better. For me, I get consumed with the thought that I’m a burden and everyone would have a better life without me.” — Desi W.

“Having a someone/friend tell you how much you mean to them really helps. They don’t even need to talk about what you are going through. Just having someone assure you that you matter, helps.” — Brooke S.

“Sharing a short story about how I brightened their day in the past... a funny joke I told or sharing a picture of a fond memory that I’m a part of. It helps me remember I’m not always consumed by my depression.” — Faith S.

3. Bring Them a Meal

“Bringing me food because I probably haven’t eaten all day, sitting there with me — not necessarily talking, but ready to listen. Watching something funny on Netflix together to get my mind off of things.” — Hannah A.

“Honestly... Food. Bring me a warm meal that I don’t have to cook. Remind me that even if everything else sucks, there are small pleasures in life too. And then, just be there with me.” — Sarah R.

4. Visit Them in Person

“Make [an] effort to come see me, because no one ever does. Everyone says they are here for me, but very rarely do I see it. Help me brush my hair. Help me clean my room. Listen. Don’t tell me, ‘It will be alright.’ Help me rationalize my anxieties. Ask me to meet you for lunch when you know I’m free. It would mean more to me than you know.” — Kat M.

“On one of my hardest days, as of the last couple months (my birthday), I was very, very low, and my girlfriend surprised me by being at my house when I came home from school. I know people can’t do that regularly, but it just turned around my entire week and made me feel so loved.” — Joel T.

“For them to show up at your place. Listen. Be casual. It helps when they do not add to the negative energy you have.” — Jonathan G.

5. Don’t Shame Them

“I’d say not talking the person out of it by saying that it’s unfair for everybody. I think there’s still a lot [of that] when it comes to the blaming and shaming of the suicidal person.” — John B.

“It would help if I wouldn’t be made to feel like I’m bringing everyone around me down. I was accused of that and it hurt because clinical depression isn’t something one can control.” — Ashley B.

6. Shower Them With Physical Attention (as Long as They Are OK With It)

“When I’m feeling suicidal, a genuine hug from someone I know loves me goes a long way to helping me not feel so completely alone. It makes me feel loved. Physical attention gives the most immediate effect and in a positive way.” — Charli S.

“Being held, hugs, holding my hand, even just their company. Even if neither of us says anything, just knowing that I’m with someone I feel safe with makes me feel like I can’t act on intentions in that moment. That I’m not alone, even if I can’t get the words out to express it, and they don’t fully understand how I’m feeling. Human connection [and] love is incredibly powerful.” — Amy S.

“I don’t really need something to hear, getting a hug would mean enough for me. Because it shows that they care, they love me and want me to be here.” — Andy W.

7. Send Some Humor Their Way

“Send me funny pictures of cats and dogs. I’m a furbaby mama so those always work, plus videos. My friends live in other states so they can’t be here physically.” — Roxy R.

“Send me funny memes or jokes. But the best would be if they sent me a funny photo of a good time we had together and remind me that I can be a happy and positive person. They could even text me a funny thing we did when we were young or a bad date I once told them about.” — Kam S.

8. Help Them Clean

“When I’m suicidal, I don’t have the energy to do the dishes or clean my room or do laundry. Typically my house gets messier when I’m depressed. When I wake up and see the mess around me it makes me feel even worse about myself. It’s one more reminder that I’m ‘failing’ at life. Just come over and help me clean.” — Megan T.

“Coming over and hanging pictures that have been in a box for six months or turning on music and helping me clean. Don’t do it for me. Motivate me and be with me.” — Kati W.

9. Talk But Say More Than “It’ll Be OK”

“Having them recognize the signs even when I’m not flat-out saying I’m idealizing. Give me a big hug and don’t let go for a little bit. [Don’t] use the typical ‘It’ll all be OK’ lines. If I’m at the point of having ideations, I’ve convinced myself things aren’t going to be OK in the end.” — Matt K.

“Take the time to have a real conversation. I was depressed and lonely last night and a stranger talked to me for probably a couple hours, let me lay out my situation, talked to me like a person, told me how badass I am and made me focus on the good I’m doing instead of the bad. When I see someone post about being suicidal, I try to do the same. I’ll message them and talk to them until they’ve calmed down enough that I know they’re safe. Definitely validate the person’s struggle. Let them know that they’re not ‘crazy’ for feeling that way and that they are strong for surviving each second. People say to take it a day at a time, but sometimes even a minute is too much. So I always say to take it a second at a time. Then by the time they’ve read that sentence, they’ve already survived several seconds and that’s something to celebrate.” — Jayme S.

10. Just Be There to Listen

“Just come be here. You don’t have to say anything, just be present. We can watch stupid movies or blast music. Not being alone in those times is enough to make a huge difference.” — Jessica Z.

“Literally just showing up. Even if I don’t want to talk, just be in my presence, supportive of my needs. Chances are I will eventually open up. Most of the time all I need is to not be alone.” — Julie C.

“When I was suicidal, one of my friends sat with me while I cried. It’s hard feeling vulnerable with people. Telling someone the good things you see about them is also helpful when they are down.” — LeLania L.

Suicidal thoughts are a common response to depression, bipolar disorder and a wealth of other mental health disorders. And if you have a friend or loved one going through some inner turmoil, the best you can do is remind them of who they are and that you are there for them. Empathy is a really powerful tool, and so is human connection.

**What are some ways you want your loved ones to show up in your times of need?
Let us know in the comments.**

RESOURCES

If you or someone you know needs help, visit our [suicide prevention resources](#).

If you need support right now, call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255, the Trevor Project at 1-866-488-7386 or reach the Crisis Text Line by texting "START" to 741741.