

What can you do?

Listen

- Let them talk; try not to look shocked or terrified!
- Make it clear that you know they are distressed and that you are here for them

Asking people for details will not make them more suicidal; it might help them come into a more rational mindset and think things through logically

Believe them

- Even if you are confident that they will not act on their suicidal feelings, take them seriously

- Ask what they are planning to do, when, if they have prepared (such as stockpiling medication). Ask who would find them and what they expect will happen.

Be Direct

Explore

- Ask whether they have people they can turn to
- Will they be OK until they see you next? Are they willing to ring the crisis team or Samaritans or Rethink?

Trust people to use the coping skills they have described to you; do not act as if they cannot make their own choices and survive; they have done that their entire life before they met you

Be Honest

- Explain your position; can you stay with them? Do you need to phone the crisis team?
- Don't be sneaky about what actions you will have to take

Safeguard

- Follow through on the actions you need to take:
- Phone an ambulance if necessary, phone the crisis team or their GP, signpost the client or rebook them for a follow up appointment

Suggestions you can make

Divert

- Acknowledge their distress and ask them how they normally cope with feelings like this; help them start to see this as a tidal wave, not the end of the world

Distract

- What can they do at home or outside of their time with you?
- Exercise? Parenting? Binge-watching TV?

Delay

- Death comes to everyone eventually; can they agree to die another day?

Reinforce to them that you believe in their ability to keep themselves safe, and help them to recognise their own internal resources for coping, and other people they can reach out to for help **NOT JUST YOURSELF AS HELP**