



**Kitchener-Waterloo
Sexual Assault Support Centre**

151 Frederick St, Suite 201,
Kitchener, Ontario, N2H 2M2

**24 Hour Crisis &
Support Line** (519) 741-8633

Business Line (519) 571-0121
Fax Line (519) 571-0522
TTY/TDD (519) 571-0864
Website www.kwsasc.org

Danger/Warning Signs of Potential Suicide.

A warning about warning signs:

The majority of the population at any one time does not have many of the warning signs and has a lower suicide risk rate. However a lower rate in the larger population is still a lot of people. Many completed suicides had only a few of the conditions listed below. In a one person to another person situation, all indications of suicidality need to be taken seriously.

There are events, emotional and behavioural changes that are present and most likely contribute to one's thoughts on committing suicide.

Remember;

**Suicide is chosen;
It happens when pain exceeds one's resources for coping
with pain.**

Like many life events, we all face challenges that create different levels of anxiety and stress. Often the level of anxiety or stress depends on our individual make-up, individual capacity to handle pain and individual resources for support and problem solving.

Events often associated with increased risk of suicide:

- Death or terminal illness of relative or friend
- Divorce, separation, broken relationship, stress on family
- Loss of health (real or imaginary)
- Loss of job, home, money, status, self-esteem, personal security
- Alcohol or drug abuse
- Depression
 - *In the young* depression may be masked by hyperactivity or acting out behaviour.
 - *In the elderly* it may be incorrectly attributed to the natural effects of aging.
 - Depression that seems to quickly disappear for no apparent reason is cause for concern.
 - The early stages of recovery from depression can be a high risk period. Recent studies have associated anxiety disorders with increased risk from attempted suicide.



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Emotional and behavioural changes associated with increased risk of suicide.

- Overwhelming pain;
 - Pain that threatens to exceed the person's pain coping capacities. (Be it emotional or physical pain) Suicidal feelings are often the result of longstanding problems that have been exacerbated by recent precipitating events. The precipitating factors may be new pain or the loss of pain coping resources.
- Hopelessness; the feeling that the pain will continue or get worse & that things will never get better.
- Powerlessness; the feeling that one's resources for reducing pain are exhausted.
- Feelings of worthlessness, shame, guilt, self-hatred, 'no one cares'. Fears of losing control – harming self or others.
- Personality becomes sad, withdrawn, tired, apathetic, anxious, irritable, or prone to angry outbursts.
- Confusion – inability to concentrate.
- Declining performance I school, work, or other activities (occasionally the reverse – someone who volunteers for extra duties because they need to fill up their time)
- Declining interest in sex, friends, or activities previously enjoyed.
- Neglect of personal welfare, deteriorating physical appearance
- Alterations in either direction in sleeping or eating habits.
- Difficult times:
 - Holidays, anniversaries, and the first week after discharge from a hospital, just before or after a diagnosis of a major illness; just before and during disciplinary proceedings.

Direct Suicidal Behaviour.

- Previous suicide attempts, 'mini- attempts'
- Explicit statements of suicidal ideation of feelings, talk of wanting to die
- **Development of suicidal plan, acquiring the means, rehearsal behaviour, setting a time for the attempt.**
- Reckless behaviour – besides suicide other leading causes of death among young people are homicide, accidents, drug overdose etc.
- Unexplained accidents among children and the elderly
- Making out a will or giving away favorite possessions
- Inappropriately saying goodbye
- Verbal behaviour that is ambiguous or indirect: 'I'm going away on a real long trip', 'You won't have to worry about me anymore', 'I want to go to sleep and never wake up, 'I'm so depressed, I just can't go on', 'Does God punish suicides', 'Voices are telling me to do bad things', requests for euthanasia information, inappropriate joking, stories or essays on morbid themes.