

## After a Crisis: Short-term Strategies to Help Youth at Risk of Suicide

Moving an individual from crisis to having a healthy approach to life requires teamwork. Many different people can be in positions to help set a person on this path. The first step is to acknowledge the youth is at a difficult point in life and that change will require motivation, commitment and practice. Realistic goals can be achieved by focusing on the youth's strengths and innate abilities. Multiple strategies that fully involve the youth are needed and regular evaluation will ensure the strategies are workable within the context of the youth's life.

### Ask the right questions

Gather information about the person's life

- ◆ What has been happening in your life lately?
- ◆ Have you experienced hardships, or difficult situations in the past? Would you like to tell me about those times?
- ◆ How did you deal with those situations?
- ◆ Who helped you? How did they help you? Are these people available to you when you need them? Do you know how to reach out to them?
- ◆ Do you think there are any other people in your life that you can go to if necessary? Who are they?

Facilitate problem solving

- ◆ Let's identify the problems in your life right now? Which, to you, is the most distressing?
- ◆ How can we break the problem down into more manageable pieces? Let's talk about some solutions?
- ◆ What have you learned from your past experiences that we can use in your situations now?
- ◆ What are some of your strengths and talents, e.g., hobbies, interests? What do you think others would say your strengths and talents are?
- ◆ What are some things that we can change right now that will help your situation?

### Overall strategies

Objective	Suggested Strategies
Increase connection with family and community	Offer to meet with family and youth to discuss options, e.g., family counselling Help youth to identify ways to be more involved at home, e.g., help with housework, siblings or pets. Help youth to find volunteer opportunities in school and community. Help youth to identify sources of peer support. Help youth to find a mentor. Celebrate every step forward.
Improve communication skills	Identify resources available to youth, e.g., books and videos. Suggest visiting the library. Work with youth to investigate cost effective courses on communication for the individual and possibly other family members. Assist youth in identifying other community resources available. Work with individual to practice new skills. Celebrate small and big successes.
Build individual strengths	Help youth to identify resources in the home, school and community that will provide opportunities to explore hobbies and interests. (Many cities, towns and communities have subsidized programs available for families in need). Suggest youth keep a journal and reflect on weekly submissions. Celebrate success!