

Support your Peers

If you think someone may be in danger of suicide - **Tell a DOC staff right away.**

Ways you can help a struggling peer:

- Pay attention.
 - Notice if someone seems sad, angry or hopeless.
- Show you care.
 - Offer to talk, but don't force them if they are not ready.
- Listen without judgment.
 - You don't have to be an expert to offer support.
- Ask directly - It's okay to ask, "Are you thinking about hurting yourself?"
 - This won't put the idea in their head.
- Encourage them to get help.
 - Suggest talking to mental health staff.
- Respect their privacy
 - Do not share their concerns with others unless they are in danger

Ways to Take Care of Yourself:



- Exercise, eat well, and try to sleep 7–9 hours a night
- Stay in touch with family and friends through letters or phone calls.

- Try relaxation techniques like deep breathing or meditation.
- Do activities that help you feel calm and focused.
- Talk to a counselor or mental health staff when needed.
- Learn skills that can help with your future.



SUICIDE AWARENESS AND PREVENTION HANDBOOK



600-HA005 (R. 06/2025)

Warning Signs

Look for these signs, especially if they are new, getting worse, or connected to a painful event:

- Talking about wanting to die or feeling hopeless
- Making a plan to end their life
- Feeling trapped or in unbearable pain
- Believing they are a burden to others
- Using more alcohol or drugs
- Acting anxious, reckless, or withdrawn
- Sleeping too much or too little
- Showing big mood swings or extreme anger

You Are Not Alone - Mental health is important, and help is available.

You Matter

Your mental health is important, no matter where you are. Taking care of yourself can help make things easier. You are not alone, and help is available.

Support is Available



- **Call 988 to talk to a trained professional who cares.**
- **Fill out a Mental Health Kite to speak with DOC mental health staff.**

Getting Mental Health or Psychiatry Help

Routine Care

Fill out a Health Services Kite if you:

- Want to start mental health care.
- Need a sooner appointment.
- Have concerns, but no immediate danger to yourself.



Psychiatry Treatment

Fill out a Psychiatry Kite if you:

- Want to learn about medications for mental health.
- Have side effects from current medications.
- Need changes to your medications.

Emergency Services

Tell a staff member you have a **Mental Health Emergency** if:

- You have thoughts of suicide or harming yourself.
- You feel you are in danger right now

Your Mental Health Comes First

Entering a correctional facility is tough. You might feel stressed, hopeless, or anxious—but you are not alone. DOC mental health staff can help.



If you feel like harming yourself or killing yourself, talk to a staff member right away and tell them you have a Mental Health Emergency.

If you believe another person is in danger, **alert staff immediately**. Safety is our priority at DOC.

Recognizing these behaviors is the first step toward change. You deserve support, and help is available—whether through mental health staff, trusted peers, or structured programs. Your life matters, and there are ways to heal without harm.

Our Commitment to you



The **Department of Corrections** believes that every life matters. Suicide is preventable, and

we are working to improve mental health care, access to support, and education for everyone in our facilities.

If you need help, reach out. You are important, and your life matters.

Self-Harm & Risky Behaviors

Using drugs or alcohol can be a form of self-harm, even if it doesn't seem like it. Substances don't fix problems—they hurt your body and mind, making life harder.

Other types of self-harm include:

- Reckless behavior – getting into fights, gambling, or taking dangerous risks.
- Not caring for yourself – skipping meals, ignoring hygiene, or avoiding medical help.
- Isolating yourself – pushing away people who want to support you.
- Harmful habits – heavy drinking, self-sabotage, or making choices that increase suffering.

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