



# How to Help:

## Suicide Awareness and Prevention

Are you or someone you know having thoughts of suicide? Has a friend or colleague confided in you? There's always help. Call 911 for emergencies or text the National Suicide Hotline at 988. The LAP is here to help with **non-crisis** guidance as well, give us a call. 518-487-5688.

### Common symptoms of suicidal ideation include:

**Negative feelings:** worthlessness, hopelessness, guilt, shame, being trapped **OR** becomes suddenly joyous and carefree.

**Changes in behavior:** saying goodbye, giving away possessions, sudden interest in purchasing a gun, increasing use of alcohol or drugs and other reckless behaviors.

**Loss of Interest:** in life activities-work, hobbies, self-care.

**Isolating:** canceling plans, missing work, not responding to calls or texts.

**Talks of death or suicide:** no interest in living, discusses suicide plans, states they want to die.

**Physical ailments:** headaches, body aches and pains, with no obvious physical cause.

### How you can help:

- Reach out and ask if they're ok. Let them know they're not alone, that you are there for them. Be kind, empathetic, and patient.
- You may wish to have another person with you who is familiar with the situation, someone who has struggled with depression or suicidal ideation in the past if possible.
- Ask if they are thinking of taking their life. If yes, ask them if they have made a plan. **Listen without judgement.** Ask them if they are intending to follow through on this plan. Have they worked through the details? Have they anything in place to make it happen?
- **If there is an immediate plan and available means, or they are actively harming themselves, call 911.**
- Do not leave them alone. Arrange for others to stay with them if you cannot for whatever reason.
- Remove all means of harm from their surroundings. Firearms and medications especially.
- Call the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline at 988, have them talk with the counselor.
- Ask how else you can help. Offer to connect them with supports; family, doctors, therapists, etc.

### Do:

- Speak clearly and directly about suicide.
- Listen and be patient.
- Be available, get involved, **follow through.**
- Offer hope and help.
- Remove pills, weapons, and other means.
- Call 911 if there is imminent danger to the person or others.

### Don't:

- Ignore the behaviors.
- Shy away from talking about suicide.
- Say that things "aren't that bad" or "you don't mean it".
- Judge their thoughts and feelings.
- Promise actions you can't follow through with.
- Take responsibility for someone else's behaviors.

## Conversation starters:



I've noticed you have been really down lately and you're not responding to my texts. You've told me you don't think there's anything to live for. Have you been thinking of suicide? Let's talk about it, I'm not going anywhere until you're safe.



I heard you're looking for someone to give your dog to and you gave away your album collection. Your voicemail says you're not taking any new cases. You've not mentioned moving, so what's going on, let's talk.



I want to respect your privacy, but I'm worried about you. You've not been to work and you won't answer my texts, so I came over. There's a lot of heavy duty meds here, and you seem out of it. Are you trying to hurt yourself?

### Lawyer Focused Resources

[Lawyers Depression Project](#)- online peer-led support group for legal professionals who suffer from depression, anxiety, bipolar, OCD, eating disorders, trauma, addiction and other mental health conditions. Confidential and free. Sign up on the website.

[Lawyers Depression Support Group](#)-online support group facilitated by a mental health professional for legal professionals struggling with a range of mental and emotional health challenges. Confidential and free. Meets Fridays 12:30-1:30 pm. Contact Anne Noble [anoble@eriebar.org](mailto:anoble@eriebar.org) for Zoom link.

[Onondaga County Lawyers Depression Group](#)-in-person once a month meeting facilitated by a mental health professional for legal professionals struggling with depression, anxiety, trauma and other mental and emotional health struggles. Confidential and free. Contact [Jeff Unaitis](#) for meeting date and time, and location.

[Lawyers with Depression](#) website. Hosted by Dan Lukasik, a lawyer living and working with major depressive disorder, this comprehensive website provides information, guidance, and other resources for the lawyer struggling with depression.

### Additional Resources

[NYS Crisis Text Line](#) Text Got5 to 741741

[NYS Office of Mental Health](#)

[Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services](#) (SAMHSA)

[National Alliance on Mental Illness](#) (NAMI)

[Anxiety and Depression Association of America](#) (ADAA)

**\*Suicide and Crisis LIFELINE\***  
**Call or text 988**

 **Lawyer Assistance Program**

If you or someone you know is struggling with mental, emotional, or substance abuse issues call the **Lawyer Assistance Program Hotline**

**877-772-8835**

#useyourfour

*The LAP Hotline is available 24/7 for anyone needing support. NYSBA members are eligible for four free counseling sessions through a Hotline referral.*

Don't hesitate to contact the LAP  
518.487.5688 or [lap@nysba.org](mailto:lap@nysba.org). Staff can provide referrals, resources and connections to individual and group peer support.

[www.nysba.org/lap](http://www.nysba.org/lap)