

7 Things Attempt Survivors Wish Their Families and Friends Knew

When you find out that a loved one had attempted suicide, you may feel overwhelmed with questions. *Why didn't they come to me? What did I miss?* And most perplexing, *What do I do now?* The Lifeline asked people to recall the aftermath of their attempts to give you some insight into what they wanted and needed from their friends and family following their darkest moments. While there's no formula or one-size-fits-all answer, we hope learning from these attempt survivors will help you feel confident in supporting your loved one.

1. "I want to talk about my pain."

I wished I could talk to my parents about what I was going through, but I was scared they would get mad at me. I knew that their anger would stem from the fact that they love me and hate the way I feel. But I still needed to talk about my pain, even if they didn't know how to help. – Shelby

2. "Please don't make me feel guilty."

The guilt that people put on me after my attempts didn't help. They would say things like, "Don't you know what it would have done to me if you had died?" That just made me depressed all over again. Now on top of everything else there was all this guilt, so I punished myself. – Ashley

3. "Hug me."

What helped me most was when people didn't ask me questions like "Why did you want to do it?" or "What is so freaking bad about your life?!" and instead just gave me hugs and told me they loved me. I wanted to know that they still want me in their lives. – Joe

4. “Please don’t leave me alone.”

No matter how hard I fight to get away, push others far from me, just don’t let me be alone. Being alone equals time. Time to think, time to dwell, time to act. – Stormi

5. “I wish they had seen the signs and asked if I was thinking about suicide.”

I’m not blaming anyone, but I wish my family had known the warning signs of suicide and asked me if I was thinking about killing myself. I don’t know if it would have made a difference. It’s just that so many people are scared to mention the “s” word, and think that asking someone if they’re thinking of suicide is going to encourage them or put the idea in their head. That’s not the case at all. – Melanie

6. “Tell me you love me.”

I needed help and love and support. I needed them to tell me that they loved me and that I was okay as a person, that I meant something to them and that I had value and worth. Most importantly, that I didn’t need to be fixed. I just needed them to be there. – Kimberly

7. “Eventually, I’ll want to move on.”

Hovering over a person who attempted suicide can make them feel like they lost everyone’s trust. My father still won’t talk to me about my attempt, but still asks me more than ten years later, “You’re not feeling like you did in high school are you? You’re not going to do THAT again?” – Liza