



How to ask **FOR HELP** during challenging **moments?**

Support Material for Psychology and Social Work Professionals in
Yellow September



Hi, I am Gessica!

I will accompany you with this support material for school interventions in the **Yellow September campaign**.

My main goal is to guide you in conducting Yellow September actions through a presentation that aims to encourage **seeking help in difficult times**.

To this end, I will address some **true and false conceptions** about suicide, provide guidelines to identify **risk and protective factors**, and present **strategies to help** people facing adversities.

Happy reading!

Initial recommendations



Before we begin, I have some recommendations:

- Use of a **TV or projector** for slide display. If not possible, I suggest providing the slides for participants to view on their mobile devices;
- Creation of **cards in red and green** (front and back in distinct colors) for students to respond True or False during the activity;
- **True or false activity:** First, present the statement and ask participants to raise their cards according to their individual opinions. Later, you will explain why the conception is true or a misconception;
- During the explanation of the statements in the activity, **psychologists and social workers** should develop three arguments to justify each statement, and **teachers** can choose at least one explanation.
- Because it's a sensitive topic that tends to mobilize some individuals, it's essential that during the presentation day and also in the subsequent days, the school has a psychologist available to provide or refer students needing assistance.

This material has been prepared as a guide for a SLIDE presentation that can be accessed by clicking [HERE](#).

Important concepts

To delve into the discussion about intervention, I would like to introduce some concepts related to suicidal behavior.

These definitions are crucial for a deeper understanding of the topic, although delving into specific details isn't necessary as it's not the focus of this presentation.

Anyway, it's good to know.

Suicidal ideation

When the individual thinks about being the agent of their own death.

Thoughts of death

Thoughts expressing hopelessness, but the person would not be the agent of their own death.

Example: "I wish God would take me".

Suicidal plan

Suicide implementation plan, which may encompass the place, method, and date of execution.

Completed suicide

When a suicide attempt results in the person's death.

Self-harm without suicidal ideation

When a person engages in behaviors that harm their own body but doesn't intend to cause their own death.

Suicide survivors

People who have lost a loved one to suicide.



Terms to be avoided



It's important to provide educational and supportive information in a responsible and safe manner.

Therefore, when discussing self-harm or suicide, don't mention methods, refrain from giving details of specific cases you know, and avoid showing photos.

These precautions are essential to prevent negative triggers.



Throughout the presentation, avoid using the term 'SUICIDAL' to refer to individuals who have attempted suicide.

When we use this term, we inadvertently reduce the person who is dealing with a difficult time to a condition of suicidal thoughts.

Another suggestion is to replace the term 'COMMITTED SUICIDE' with 'person at risk of suicide' or 'person who died by suicide'.

To commit suicide" is often associated with "committing a crime". Using this phrase may convey the idea that the person who died by suicide committed a criminal act, contributing to the stigma surrounding this issue.

Finally, another term that can be avoided is 'SELF-MUTILATION'. An alternative is to refer to self-harming behaviors or self-injury.

When discussing self-harming behavior, we aren't necessarily referring to mutilation, but rather to self-injury, which can be a way of coping with psychological distress, often without suicidal intent, as defined earlier.



We will now begin with the contents on the slide. At this moment, **you can ask the students what they know about Suicide Prevention Month** to encourage participation during the presentation.

After listening to them, **explain the central objective of the campaign.**

Here's a suggestion of what can be said:

The Yellow September campaign aims primarily to promote life appreciation and suicide prevention. This means that during September, various actions are taken to emphasize the importance of caring for our mental health and **being attentive to signs of emotional distress in ourselves and others.** It's a time to show support, encourage seeking help, and, whenever possible, accompany those who are struggling in their search for support.



Do you know what the
**SEPTEMBER
YELLOW
CAMPAIGN IS?**

What is true and false about suicide?

This is the beginning of the activity.

You'll explain that there are true and misconceived notions about suicide that are important to discuss.

Afterwards, read each statement, ask students to raise their signs, and explain each one

TRUE OR FALSE...

Those who threaten don't act.

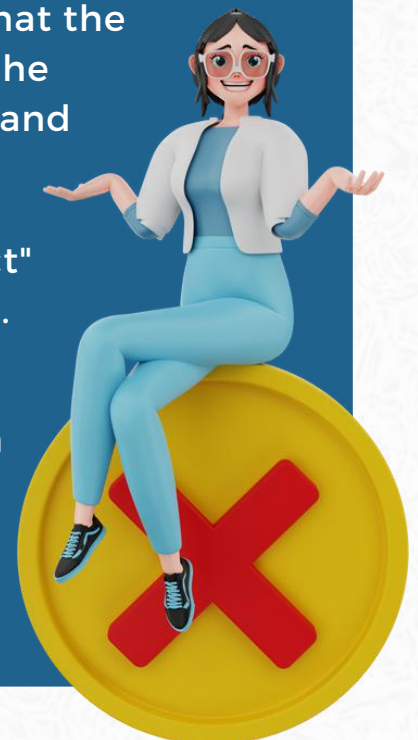


Indicate that the statement is false and discuss how people who contemplate harming themselves often express a desire to die days or weeks beforehand.

Furthermore, it's important to emphasize that the expression of such "threats" indicates that the individual may be experiencing adversities and psychological distress.

Believing that "those who threaten don't act" is a way of invalidating someone else's pain.

Expressions indicating suicidal thoughts should not be ignored; We should see them as a sign that something is wrong and as a cry for help.



What is true and false about suicide?

TRUE OR FALSE...

Suicide attempt is a warning sign. It's a cry for help.



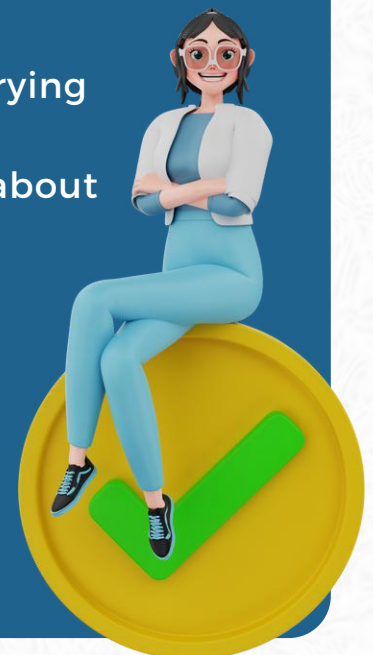
After revealing to the students that this statement is true, you can start the explanation as follows:

When someone attempts to take their own life, it's a strong indication that this person is going through emotional difficulties and needs help.

It's important to take these attempts seriously and seek support immediately for the person in question, as they are desperately sending out a cry for help.

Imagine that a friend of yours posted a worrying message on social media, saying that he no longer sees meaning in life and is thinking about giving up.

As soon as you receive something in this way, it's important to validate what is being said and look for ways to help. Doubting or ignoring these statements can make the situation worse and put the person at greater risk.



What is true and false about suicide?

TRUE OR FALSE...

People who talk about suicide just want attention.



For this sentence, you can start the explanation by saying that it's a common belief about suicide, but it's a misconception that people share.

In fact, when someone mentions that they are thinking about doing something to themselves, it's what we emphasize as being a cry for help.

These individuals may be experiencing profound emotional distress and may not know how else to express it.

Furthermore, openly discussing suicide can help break the stigma surrounding the topic. By promoting this information, we can contribute to more supportive environments where people feel more comfortable seeking support and help when needed.



What is true and false about suicide?

TRUE OR FALSE...

Talking about suicide encourages people to attempt suicide.



Explain to the students that discussing suicide responsibly doesn't encourage people to attempt suicide. In fact, open and informed conversation about the topic is crucial for prevention.

When we discuss suicide sensitively, we are demystifying misconceptions surrounding the topic and encouraging people to seek help when they are going through difficult times.

Ignoring suicide or avoiding the topic can result in isolation and lack of support for those who need it.

It's important to provide accurate information and support resources so that people know where to seek help.

Promoting discussions on this topic can help individuals recognize when they need help and also raise awareness to pay attention to those around us.



What is true and false about suicide?

TRUE OR FALSE...

People who think about or have attempted suicide are weak.



Discuss that this is a common perception about suicide, but it's not true and needs to be demystified.

People who have attempted suicide or are considering it aren't weaker; they simply need help.

Explain that these individuals are experiencing difficulties and psychological distress.

Thus, there are no connections between suicide, weakness, courage, or cowardice.

Explain that eliminating misguided statements like this can help reduce stigma around this type of suffering and contribute to building a more supportive environment.



What is true and false about suicide?

TRUE OR FALSE...

Recognizing warning signs and offering support help prevent suicide



At this moment, emphasize to students that recognizing warning signs and offering support are essential actions in suicide prevention. Often, individuals contemplating suicide may display indirect signs such as expressing feelings of hopelessness, deep sadness, social isolation, or even mentioning suicidal thoughts.

Recognizing these signs and taking seriously what the person is expressing is crucial. However, these signs may not always seem clear, especially when we have a close relationship with the individual, which can make perception difficult.

Sometimes, expressions can be subtle and seemingly normal. Therefore, it's crucial to be alert to changes in behavior, emotions, or words spoken by those around us.

Later on, we'll discuss some of these signs so we can be alert and offer help



RISK FACTORS



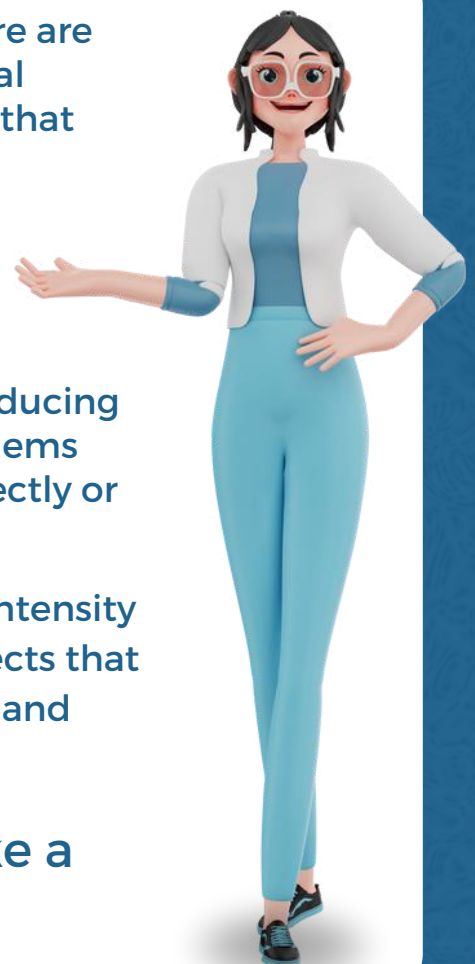
When presenting this slide, explain that there are factors that make certain individuals or social groups more vulnerable to suicide. Mention that these factors can be summarized into three:

Adversities: Whether personal problems or social issues shared by a group of people.

Coping: It's how a person manages stress-inducing demands. It's how they deal with their problems and what they do to try to resolve them, directly or indirectly.

Mental health: It's about the presence and intensity of psychological or psychopathological aspects that cause distress, such as symptoms of anxiety and depression.

These three elements behave like a self-reinforcing cycle.





Now, you will present some warning signs that have been emphasized earlier as important aspects in suicide prevention

Don't say that ALL people at risk of suicide show these signs. Comment that they are important factors to pay attention to, especially when the changes presented differ from how the person typically behaved.

Read each of the signs on the slide, and throughout the presentation, you can provide examples of how they may manifest.

Decrease or absence of self-care

When someone starts neglecting self-care, such as personal hygiene or eating, it can be a warning sign.

For example, someone who used to dress well and take care of their appearance suddenly stops doing so.

Changes in activity or mood levels

Changes such as a significant increase in agitation, nervousness, or sadness can be important signs.

For example, someone who is usually active may start to show a lack of energy and disinterest in activities they used to enjoy



Increasing isolation from friends/family

Social isolation, especially when it's a drastic change from previous behavior, can be concerning

For example, someone who was outgoing and social, but suddenly starts avoiding friends and family, canceling plans, and turning down invitations to go out.

Abusive use of drugs/alcohol

For example, someone who previously had moderate alcohol consumption starts drinking excessively.

This can be an indicator that they are trying to cope with emotional distress in an inadequate way.

PROTECTIVE FACTORS



Start this section by explaining what protective factors are:

These are characteristics or resources that can increase people's resilience, meaning their ability to deal with adversities and also promote psychological well-being

Next, you can explain each of these factors.

- 1 Social support
- 2 High self-esteem
- 3 Having goals
- 4 Flexibility

Social support

This support can be understood as a support network composed of trusted individuals with whom you feel comfortable sharing your feelings. They can be family members, friends, or teachers. **For example, someone going through a tough time may find emotional support in close friends who are willing to listen and offer help.**

High self-esteem

Self-esteem is associated with how a person evaluates their personal worth. When someone has high self-esteem, they perceive themselves as more capable of facing challenges and rejecting negative thoughts about themselves. **For example, they can withstand external criticism and remain more resilient in the face of difficulties that arise.**

Having goals

Having goals and objectives can serve as daily motivations. When people have something to strive for, it can contribute to their mental health. **For example, someone studying to achieve a desired career has motivation and a clear goal to reach.**

Flexibility

Greater attention to flexibility... Being flexible is one of the key characteristics for better mental health. Flexibility is linked to the ability to adapt to changes or challenges, which can be essential for coping with adversities

For example, imagine a student who planned to enter college right after finishing high school but didn't get a high enough grade. How this person will act in this situation is very important.

If she is an **inflexible person**, she may start seeing it as the end of a dream and fail to see other possibilities. On the other hand, someone with **greater flexibility** can consider alternatives, like a second choice of course or being okay with studying another year to try again.





During this slide, explain that the behaviors of someone contemplating self-harm may not always be overtly displayed.

On the other hand, under certain circumstances, we can identify other signs of the need for help based on what they express.

You can mention that certain statements, along with the "risk factors" discussed earlier, serve as signs of suicidal ideation. Inform the students that these are examples of what people might say when they are struggling to cope with their problems. Read the statements and explain that they can indicate **feelings of helplessness, despair, and hopelessness**.

At this moment, remember that your words may reach people who have lost a loved one to suicide, possibly causing guilt for not recognizing the signs. Inform them that it's common for the general population not to notice or fully understand the seriousness of the signs that may have been present. Therefore, emphasize the importance of psychological support in emotional distress situations, so that a professional can conduct a proper assessment and management.



This is a crucial moment in the presentation as it will help students understand how they can maintain daily caring attitudes towards those around them.

Talk to them about the importance of showing that we care about others and how essential it's to **validate and support** those who are going through difficult times.

Remember that it's essential to respect everyone's personal boundaries. Not everyone is ready to share their feelings, and that should be respected. Therefore, these everyday affectionate behaviors can signal that you're there if the person feels comfortable talking about how they feel.

What to do to help someone going through a tough time?

Guide and, if possible, accompany that person to seek professional help!

This is the moment to emphasize how we can make ourselves available to offer support.

You can talk to them in the following way:

If you notice that someone you know is going through a very tough time and needs professional support, consider accompanying them to a mental health professional. This can be comforting and encouraging for the person dealing with difficulties.

It's a way to show that we are willing to support and care about their well-being. Emphasize that you are available if they want to talk or that together, you can explore options to get better support.

If you can't go with them, talk to them about the possibility of seeking help from a trusted adult, someone they feel comfortable talking to about their feelings, and who can accompany them in seeking professional help.





No matter how tough it may seem now, **negative thoughts and tough times don't last forever.**

IMPORTANT REMINDER!

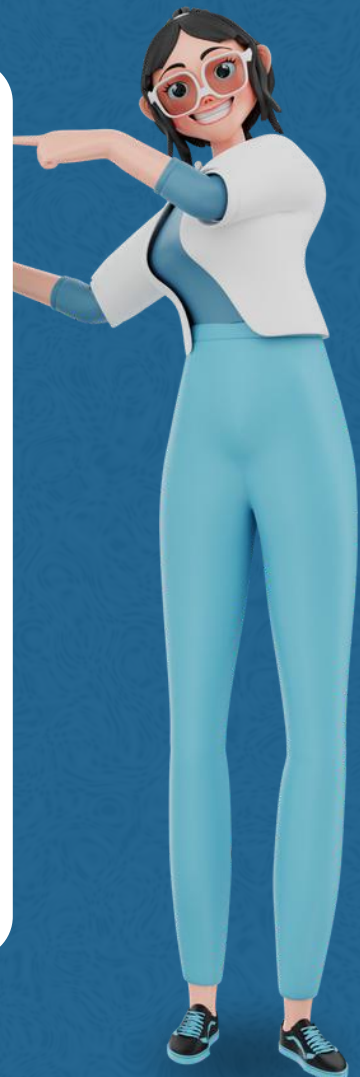
This is an opportunity to acknowledge that it's completely understandable to believe that difficult moments are endless when we are in the midst of them.

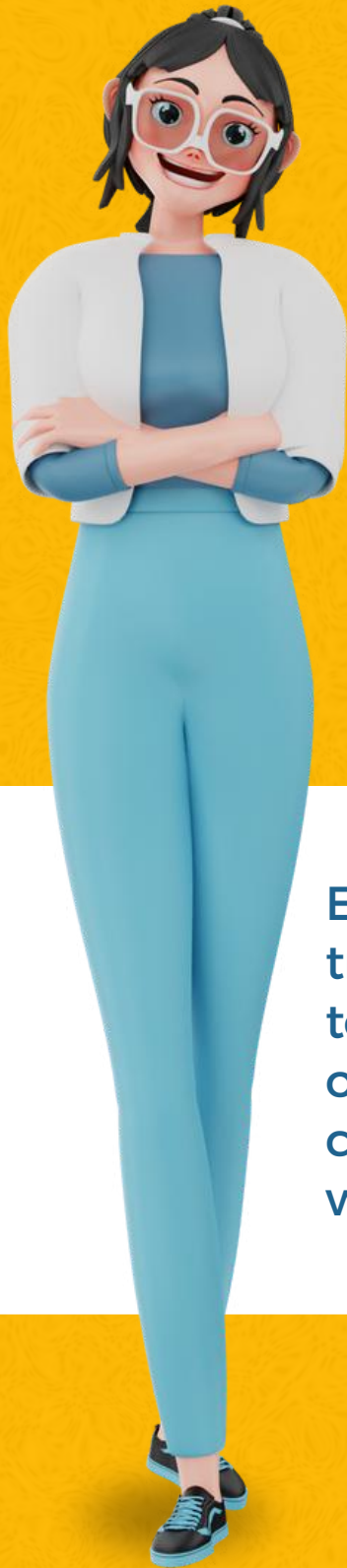
It's normal to feel this way, but it's also important to understand that life is a journey of ups and downs.

Challenging moments also pass; they can be intense, but just as good times are temporary, periods of difficulty are too.

This doesn't mean ignoring or minimizing the challenges, but rather believing that **we are capable of facing them.**

Sometimes, sharing what we are feeling can make a big difference. Therefore, encourage students to acknowledge their feelings, believe in their ability to face adversities, and seek support when necessary.





How to ask for help?

If you realize you need help, it's important to communicate what you are going through or feeling to a **trusted adult** – whether it's a family member or someone else you know. They can guide you in finding the most viable solution to help you.

Explain that, in addition to seeking out a trusted adult, it's important for the person to be aware of some public services that offer mental health care or emergency care. These services are allies in promoting well-being and preventing risky behaviors.

SEEKING SUPPORT

Explain that talking to a friend or an adult is a great start when you're facing challenges, but sometimes, it might not be enough. In certain situations, it may be necessary to seek professional support. It's important to recognize that reaching out to trusted individuals or professionals can provide the additional help you need.

There are many ways to find help, whether through school resources, healthcare providers, community organizations, or online platforms. Professionals in these areas are trained to offer the support and guidance that can make a significant difference in your well-being.

The key is to encourage yourself to recognize when you need more support and to take the step to seek it. Don't hesitate to ask for help from the closest professional available, as professional help can make a significant difference in your well-being.



ANY QUESTIONS?

If you feel the need to talk about something, seek out your trusted adult.



Wrapping up the presentation, I'm here to answer any questions you may have. Emphasize the presentation's objective and this year's motto for the Yellow September campaign:

“If you need it, ask for help!”

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2023

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How to cite: Oliveira-Santos, B., Souza, M. H. S., & Faro, A. (2023). *How to ask for help during challenging moments? Support Material for Psychology and Social Work Professionals in Yellow September* [Booklet digital]. Grupo de Estudos e Pesquisas em Psicologia da Saúde – GEPPS (Universidade Federal de Sergipe, UFS, Brasil). <https://doi.org/10.29327/5413991>



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