



APS GUIDE • FOR LOVED ONES

Someone You Care About Is Struggling

How to notice, talk about it, and support them without burning out

A guide from the Suicide Prevention Association — Réunion Island

Free helpline, 24/7 — 0800 62 01 62

You're here because someone you love seems to be doing badly, and you're wondering whether you should worry — and above all, what to do. This guide gives concrete pointers for taking action, no professional training required.

① Warning signs

- Phrases like “it would be easier if I weren't here” or “you'd be better off without me” — even said as a joke.
- Sudden social withdrawal, losing interest in things that used to matter.
- Giving away or organizing belongings, unusual goodbyes.
- A sudden mood shift — especially a sudden calm after a long rough patch, which can signal a decision has been made.
- Risk-taking, increasing alcohol or substance use.

② How to bring it up

The most common fear is “putting the idea in their head” by asking. It's actually the opposite: asking directly brings relief, and shows the person they can talk about it without being judged.

The question to ask, plainly

“Do you ever think about suicide?” or “Have you been having dark thoughts lately?”

Ask calmly, one-on-one, without detours or judgment.

③ What helps

- Listen without minimizing (“it’s not that bad”, “think about something else”) or dramatizing.
- Stay available over time: a regular call, a message, a presence that asks nothing in return.
- Help put dangerous means at a distance (medication, weapons, etc.) if immediate danger comes up.
- Help them connect with a professional or a listening line — offer to call together, or to book the first appointment.

④ What's best to avoid

- Promising to keep it secret if a danger has been identified: the person's life comes before confidentiality.
- Guilt-tripping or moralizing (“think of your kids”, “you don't have the right”).
- Leaving the person alone if they mention a specific method and a specific time: in that case, stay with them and call emergency services (15 or 112).

⑤ And you — how do you hold on?

Supporting a loved one in distress is draining. You don't have to carry it alone: talk to someone too, another relative or a professional. Taking care of yourself isn't selfish — it's what lets you stay present for the long run.

Numbers to know

In case of immediate danger to life

15 (SAMU/ambulance) • 18 (Fire dept.) • 112 (European emergency number)

APS — Suicide Prevention Association, Réunion

0800 62 01 62 — free helpline, 24/7, staffed by trained volunteer listeners.

3114 — French national suicide prevention line

Free, confidential, 24/7. For the person in crisis, their loved ones, or professionals.

Kozé Jeunes (ages 12-25)

0801 901 974 — A listening and referral line dedicated to teenagers and young adults in Réunion.