A fever of the mind

Thoughts of suicide are a signal

A fever isn't the illness. It's the body's way of saying it needs care. In the same way, thoughts of suicide can be understood as a signal that something is out of alignment and needs attention.

1 A signal, not a character flaw

Seeing thoughts of suicide as a symptom of pain helps us respond with care instead of fear or shame, whether they are our own thoughts or someone else's.

2 They can come and go

Just like a fever, these thoughts can rise and pass. Feeling better later doesn't mean the pain earlier wasn't real.

3 Most people want the pain to stop

Someone having thoughts of suicide usually doesn't want to die. They want the pain to end and can't yet see another way. Help them remember what makes them want to live.

Words that are easy to miss

- "I'm done."
- "I can't do this anymore."
- "I just want it all to stop."
- "Everyone would be better off without me."

Listen beyond the words for signs of extreme distress, and respond with compassion.

> **If you are having thoughts of suicide,** you deserve support right now. Call or text 988 (US), text HOME to 741741, or reach out to someone you trust. If you are in immediate danger, call 911.

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