What to do and what to say when your friend tells you that they are really struggling, self-harming or saying they don’t want to live

If the conversation happens on Facebook or another social media site, start by making sure the conversation is private not some where public like a chat forum or on status updates.

1. Build trust by asking open-ended questions (a question that doesn’t require a yes/no response i.e. *tell me how you feel or tell me what would make things better*).
2. Listen without judgment (caring questions, plenty of time to reply)
3. Don’t rush to solve problems for them
4. Encourage action by summarising what you’ve heard and ask them what they plan to do.
5. Explore who they could talk to that like could trust (teacher, parent, friend, adult).
6. If the friend tells you that they can only trust you and don’t want to speak to anyone else explain that if they are at the risk of harm to self or by others it is better for them to talk to a trusting adult about this situation.
7. Remember to follow up with your friend to see what actions they have taken, remembering to reassure them.
8. If your friend hasn’t talked to an adult seek support yourself from and let them know of your concerns and what actions you have taken.

*Don’t be a “keyboard worrier,” talk to someone face-to-face, there will always be someone who can listen and offer good advice!! Facebook friends wont always offer the answers you need!*

*Prepared by e-safety & Wellbeing at Galen*