

# **QPR Practice Session**

## **Introduction**

To become comfortable helping someone who may be suicidal, it is very important to practice QPR at least once with a friend, family member, colleague or co-worker. The goal of this practice session is to give you the opportunity to practice listening to the problems that cause people to think about suicide and to ask about directly about suicide in a frank and compassionate manner.

Because of the stigma and fear associated with the word suicide, many people find it difficult to actually say the word. The more natural the act of asking the suicide question is, the easier it will be to ask it in future when and if you need to. You will need a partner to practice with and the session should take approximately 15 minutes.

Your partner will need to “act” as if they are in a crisis and thinking about suicide. Ideally, you and someone you know are both completing the QPR training and you can practice QPR together.

To proceed, [click here](#), download, print, and follow the instructions.

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# QPR Practice Session

## Instructions for QPR practice session/role play

### To the **QPR Gatekeeper**:

#### Step 1

*Do not read* the lower half of this page below the first dotted line, but tear or cut the sheet in half at the dotted lines, and hand one of the scripts to your partner and ask them to read their instructions and the “script.” Two scripts are provided so each person can practice QPR.

#### Step 2

Find a place where you and your partner can sit together facing each other and where you won’t be interrupted.

#### Step 3

Imagine that you are talking to your friend, family member or colleague and know them well. You also know this person has been having a lot of personal problems lately and seems to be down and blue much of the time, even saying they feel “hopeless.”

#### Step 4

As you begin your conversation with them, listen for the problems that suicide would solve and listen for a “warning sign.” When you hear the warning sign, find a way to ask the suicide question, e.g., “You seem very unhappy right now. Are you thinking about suicide?” Continue to listen and try to persuade them to go with you to get help. Be sure you complete all the QPR steps.

#### Step 5

When you have practiced QPR, you and your partner may follow the discussion guide at the end of this exercise.

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Instructions and script for the [troubled person #1](#)

Please read:

For a lot of reasons you have been feeling overwhelmed and unable to cope with life lately. You feel hopeless about your future and that you are becoming a burden on your friends and family. Someone close to you has moved away and, to make things worse, a pet you've had for 10 years was killed just three days ago. You're not enjoying things the way you used to and can't get to sleep at night. You've no appetite and can't concentrate. You feel you don't belong anywhere anymore and wonder if everyone would be better off if you were dead. You've even begun to think about how you would end your own life, but have not made a specific plan.

You are now talking with someone you know. During the course of your conversation you say, "Nothing seems fun anymore. I just can't go on anymore. Life isn't worth living."

Begin role-play ...

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Instructions and script for the [troubled person #2](#)

Please read:

You are pretty sure you are depressed. You've been tired and irritable much of the time. You lost your temper recently and almost hit someone who didn't deserve it. You've been depressed before, and especially when someone close to you died a year ago. Now a relationship that meant a lot to you has ended, and you are feeling isolated and alone. Recently, you have been wishing the pain of living would just end and that you could go to sleep and never wake up. You've even been thinking about the kind of pills you would need to end your own life.

You are now talking with someone you know. During the course of your conversation you say, "Nothing I do makes any difference. I might as well be dead. I'd like you to have (name of something personal that means a great deal to you, e.g., a music collection, ring, or personal item)."

Begin role-play....

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### Instructions:

When you have completed these practice sessions, you will find the following discussion questions useful in mastering the QPR method. We recommend you and your practice partner explore the following:

1. *“What did you become aware of during the course of this exercise?”*  
Many times participants will find that they become very involved in the role and develop a sense of empathy for what the suicidal person may be dealing with. This is a very positive insight that can be gained from this experience and you want to reinforce and support this.
2. *“What did it feel like for you to ask the suicide question?”*
3. *“What were some of the circumstances that kept you from asking the question (if you were unable to)?”* This question may reveal past experiences with suicide, some of which may inhibit your ability to apply QPR.
4. *Was it uncomfortable to ask these questions?*
5. *What do you think was the source of this discomfort?*
6. *What are some ways that you feel you can learn from this experience?*

Thank you for completing the QPR training and for addressing the subject of suicide in a frank and compassionate manner in this practice session.

Ask a question, save a life. It’s something we can all learn to do.