

Suicide- What can I do if I am worried about someone?



Thoughts of suicide can affect anyone at any time. Many people think about suicide at some point in their life. It can be distressing to learn that a loved one, family member or friend is feeling suicidal.

Often, people thinking about suicide will have experienced a stressful event associated with a feeling of loss. Events and experiences have different meanings and a different significance to each person – some people may feel able to cope whilst others may feel suicidal. It is important we do not trivialise how someone is feeling and try and cheer them up. It can take a lot of courage for someone to open up and talk about feeling suicidal. Remember thoughts of suicide are common.

There is help available and knowing that someone is struggling gives you the opportunity to support them. It is important to listen to the person and understand the reasons why they are feeling suicidal, in order to support them to move forward.

How do I know if someone is suicidal?

Suicide prevention starts with recognising the warning signs.

How they may feel:

- Hopeless, like there is no point in living.
- Tearful and overwhelmed by negative thoughts.
- Unbearable pain that you cannot imagine ending.
- Useless, not wanted or not needed by others.
- Desperate, as if you have no other choice.
- Like everyone would be better off without you.
- Cut off from your body or physically numb.
- Fascinated by death.

How they may behave:

- Poor sleep, including waking up earlier than you want to.
- A change in appetite, weight gain or loss.
- No desire to take care of yourself, for example neglecting your physical appearance.
- Wanting to avoid others.
- Making a will or giving away possessions.
- Struggling to communicate.
- Self-loathing and low self-esteem.
- Urges to self-harm.

What can I do to help?

If you think a friend or family member is suicidal there are many things you can do to help save a life.

Asking about suicide saves lives but it can be hard to know where to start or how to help. It can be scary, hard, or painful to talk about suicide – but we need to. Suicidal feelings do not have to end in suicide. Many people feel really isolated with their thoughts of suicide and do not feel that they are able to tell anyone. Evidence shows that talking about suicide does not make it more likely to happen – it reduces the stigma and is often the first step in a person's recovery.

- **Ask them directly 'Are you thinking about suicide?'** By using the word suicide, you are telling the person that it's OK to talk openly about their thoughts of suicide with you.

"Sometimes, when people are feeling the way you are, they think about suicide. Is that what you're thinking about?"

“Are you telling me you want to kill yourself? End your life? Die? Die by suicide?” “It sounds like you’re thinking about suicide, is that right?”

“It sounds like life feels too hard for you right now and you want to kill yourself, is that right?”

- If someone is suicidal, **listen to them and allow them to express their feelings**. They may feel a huge sense of relief that someone is willing to hear their darkest thoughts.

“It sounds as though things are really hard at the moment... Can you tell me a bit more?”

“Things must be so painful for you to feel like there is no way out. I want to listen and help.”

“Take your time and tell me what’s happening for you at the moment.”

“I am so sorry you’re feeling this way. Can you tell me more about how you are feeling?”

“Can you tell me more about why you want to die?”

“What has brought you to this place/to feel this way?” “It’s hard and scary to talk about suicide but take your time and I will listen.”

- **Reassure them that they are not alone, and you can look for support together.**

“It’s not uncommon to have thoughts of suicide. With help and support many people can work through these thoughts and stay safe.”

“There are organisations that offer support. I can help you find their contact details.” “You’ve shown a lot of strength in telling me this. I want to help you find support.”

“There is hope. There is help available and we can find it together”

Organisations that can help

There are many different places where you can get help and advice if you worried that someone may be having thoughts of suicide. **If its an emergency and there is a risk to life (your own or another person’s) call 999.**

The Samaritans

The Samaritans are available 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year, call FREE on 116 123 or you can email them jo@samaritans.org or visit www.samaritans.org

Mind

Provide advice and support to anyone experiencing a mental health problem. You can call their info line on 0300123 3393 9am to 6pm, Monday to Friday or you can email them at info@mind.org.uk visit the [Mind - Suicidal feelings website](http://www.mind.org.uk).

Papyrus

A UK charity for the prevention of young suicide (under 35), you can contact their HOPELINE FREE on 0800 068 4141 which is open 9am-12am (midnight) every day of the year or you can email them at pat@papyrus-uk.org or visit [Papyrus website](http://www.papyrus.org.uk).

Young Minds

Provide information and support, You can text the Young Minds Crisis Messenger for FREE 24/7 support across the UK if you are experiencing a mental health crisis. Text YM to 85258 or call their helpline FREE on 0808 802 5544, Monday to Friday 9.30am-4pm or visit [YoungMinds](http://www.youngminds.org.uk).