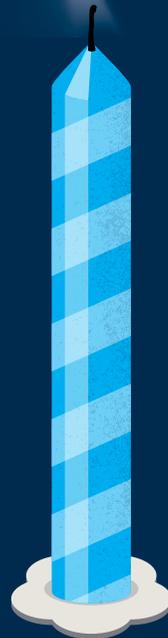


Suicide prevention and support guide





Every year more than 800,000 people die by suicide globally – that’s almost two people every minute*. And for every suicide, on average over 135 people suffer intense grief. That’s over 108 million people around the world who are impacted by suicide every year.

*Source – World Health Organisation

Many complex factors contribute to suicide, but we can all play a part in helping prevent it and supporting people who have been affected by it. With support and self-help, the majority of people who have felt suicidal go on to live fulfilling lives.

This short guide will help you:

- spot the signs of someone experiencing suicidal feelings.
- understand how to support someone you’re worried about.
- support someone who has been affected by suicide.

Spotting the signs

Suicide is rarely a spur of the moment decision. In the days and hours before people take their own lives, there are usually clues and warning signs.

The strongest and most concerning signs are verbal — “I can’t go on,” “Nothing matters any more” or even “I’m thinking of ending it all.” Always take remarks like this seriously.

Warning signs of suicide

- talking about wanting to die
- looking for a way to take one’s own life
- talking about feeling hopeless or having no purpose
- talking about feeling trapped or in unbearable pain
- talking about being a burden to others
- increasing the use of alcohol or drugs
- acting anxious, agitated or recklessly
- sleeping too little or too much
- withdrawing or feeling isolated
- showing rage or talking about seeking revenge
- displaying extreme mood swings

These signs don’t always mean that a person intends to take their own life and not everyone who is thinking about suicide will display these signs. However, the more of these and other signs a person shows, the greater the risk of suicide. If you notice any of these signs in someone it’s important to acknowledge and act on them.



Find out more...

There are many signs that can indicate someone is at risk of or thinking about suicide. To find out more click below for resources from:

Supporting someone you're worried about

Many people struggle to cope at some point in their lives. Experiencing a range of emotions during these times is common. If you're worried about someone, talk to them. You don't need to be an expert, just listening calmly to someone can have a big impact.

- Ask how they are doing.
- Listen without judging.
- Mention changes you have noticed in the person's behaviour and say that you are concerned about their wellbeing.
- If this is a colleague, offer to connect the person with a Mental Health First Aider if there is one in your location. Alternatively call the Employee Assistance Programme, if your company provides one or another health professional, such as their GP.
- Signpost to helplines like Samaritans **(24/7 call 116 123)** and CALM **(5pm- midnight call 0800 58 58 58)**.
- Continue to provide support; make it clear that you will always be willing to listen.
- Encourage them to see support from their GP. You could even help them make that phone call.



Find out more...

There is lots of advice online on having a supportive conversation with someone you are worried about. To find out more click below for resources from:

What to do in a crisis

If someone has mentioned that they are feeling suicidal or gives you any reason to believe that they may be, you should take action – just like you would if someone had a physical accident or was experiencing chest pain.

Ask the person to clarify what they mean by what they have said. For example: “Can I confirm, are you saying you have thought about suicide?”

Talk to the person calmly and ask if there is anything they need. State that help is available.

Encourage the person to talk and explain to them that you are worried and want to help them. Ask if they have a plan to take their life. This may feel confronting but it will help you understand the risk and what to do next:

If there is no immediate risk...

Ask the person if there is anyone they would like to call such as Samaritans, their GP or mental health professional. If they agree, give them space (and perhaps if they need it, help them call the Samaritans) so they have someone to talk to immediately.

If it seems like the person is about to self-harm or their life is at imminent risk (for example they leave your location without accessing help)...

Call 999.

If you are still with the person, stay with them (or make sure the person is in a private, secure place with another caring person) until professional help arrives.

Once the person is under the care of a professional, ask if they would like you to stay with them.

If this happens at work, alert a manager who can then contact the People team for further advice, guidance and support.

Continued on next page...

What to do in a crisis continued

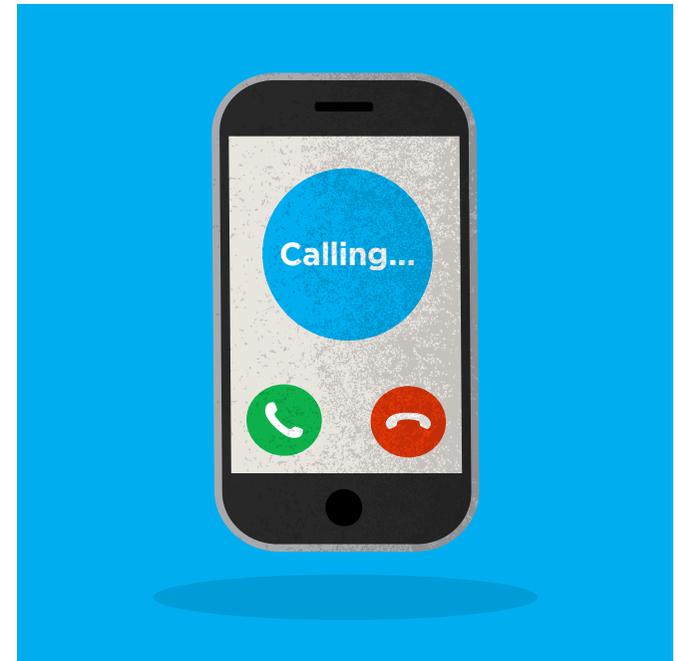
Consider accessing support for yourself. Don't under-estimate the impact this can have on you once the immediate risk has passed. It's better to over-react than to later ask yourself whether you could have done more. But whatever happens, do not feel guilty. You can play an important role in preventing suicide but you are not responsible for another person's actions.

A note about confidentiality

You must never agree to keep a plan for suicide or risk of suicide a secret. You should explain why you can't do this, eg "I care about you too much to keep a secret like this. You need help and I'm here to help you get it."

If the person refuses to give their permission, you may need to breach their confidentiality to ensure their safety. In doing this, you need to be honest and tell the person who you'll be telling. This could be 999 or NHS Direct and/or a manager (if it is someone at work) who can contact the People team for further advice, guidance and support.

Remember, it's much better to have the person angry at you than to lose them to suicide.



Useful numbers

Emergency services	999
NHS Direct	111 (England) 0845 46 47 (Wales)
Samaritans	116 123



Supporting someone affected by suicide

It's hard to know what to say when someone dies. When it's by suicide, it can be even harder to know what to say. Even if you are feeling unsure, it is much better to speak to someone and help them feel connected than to avoid them.

There are many ways you can support someone who has been affected by suicide. What help they need completely depends on the person and their response to the bereavement.

To support someone emotionally you can encourage them to:

- Express their feelings and thoughts through talking or writing.
- Join in with them positively when they are remembering their loved one.
- Encourage them and accompany them to do the things they enjoy or that make them feel good.
- Make sure they are looking after themselves.
- Encourage them to connect with others who have been bereaved, possibly through support groups

To support someone practically you could:

- Help them keep on top of maintenance such as cooking, shopping and cleaning.
- Accompany them to appointments to do with the coroner's investigation, if this is appropriate.
- Support with arrangements for the funeral.
- Offer to help with tasks like life insurance and registering the death.

Find out more...

Support After Suicide Partnership
www.supportaftersuicide.org.uk