

# Suicide Awareness



13 people each day die by suicide in England.  
Every six seconds, Samaritans responds to a call for help.  
Suicide happens globally every 40 seconds; 800,000  
people die due to suicide every year. It is the 14th  
leading cause of global mortality.

Suicide is a big problem. Knowing how to notice the  
warning signs and knowing what to say can be lifesaving.



...this guide will  
explain the  
warning signs and  
offer some useful  
advice and  
support...

# Urgent Help

If you're worried that someone is at immediate risk of taking their own life, you should do the following if you feel able:

- you should remove anything the person could use to harm themselves
- stay with them
- get emergency help. Call 999.



# The language we use around suicide is important.



## Don't use:

- Commit suicide
- Suicide victim
- Suicide 'epidemic', 'wave', 'iconic site', 'hot spot'
- Cry for help
- A 'successful', 'unsuccessful' or 'failed' suicide attempt
- Suicide 'tourist' or 'jumper'

## Use:

- A suicide
- Taken his/her/their own life
- Ended his/her/their own life
- Die by/death by suicide
- Suicide attempt
- Attempted suicide
- Person at risk of suicide

# Warning Signs

**Being able to notice warning signs of someone feeling suicidal can be lifesaving.**

## **People may experience:**

- Changes in productivity
- Changes in social functioning
- Changes in personality or behaviour
- Increased drug or alcohol use
- Changes in eating or sleeping patterns
- Signs of self-inflicted physical harm



## **How people may act:**

- Less attention to appearance
- Withdrawal or isolation
- Giving away prized possessions
- Changes in work performance
- Self-destructive and risk-taking acts
- Getting finances in order
- Sudden and unexpected 'recovery' from feeling low

# Talking about Suicide

Evidence shows asking someone if they're suicidal can protect them. By asking someone directly about suicide, you give them permission to tell you how they feel, and let them know that they are not a burden. If someone does let you know that they are having suicidal thoughts:

**Always take them seriously.**

Ask open questions such as "How have you been feeling?" or "What happened next?"

**Offer support and encourage them to talk.**

**You don't have to try to solve their problems.**

You might feel shocked, upset or frightened, but it's important not to blame the person for how they are feeling.

**Try not to judge.**

**Give them time.**

Say something like, "you're important to me".

**Let the person you're supporting know that you value them.**

Avoid expressions that centre around negative consequences of their actions, such as "I'll be so upset if you die".

**Offer to help with practical things.**

Eg. Getting them a glass of water, calling the GP or their family (with their permission). Or just watch TV with them or do an activity.

## **You need to be direct.**

Don't skirt around the topic. Direct questions about suicide can help someone talk about how they are feeling. Asking about suicidal thoughts or feelings won't push someone into doing something self-destructive. In fact, offering an opportunity to talk about feelings may reduce the risk of acting on suicidal feelings.

### **Ask questions like:**

**“Have you thought about hurting yourself?”**

**“Are you having suicidal thoughts?”**

**“Have you felt like you want to end your life?”**

**“Have you made a plan?”**

## **What to say back.**

Don't trivialise their pain and distress. Don't argue, blame, or say you understand—because you probably don't understand, and remember you don't have to have all the answers. Hope is a protective factor.

### **Some reassuring statements:**

**“You are not alone in this. I'm here for you.”**

**“You may not believe it now, but the way you're feeling will change.”**

**“I may not be able to understand exactly how you feel, but I care about you and want to help.”**

**“When you want to give up, tell yourself you will hold off for just one more day, hour, minute—whatever you can manage.”**

# Next Steps

## 1. Create a 'Safety Plan'

When they're feeling able to think about next steps for looking after themselves, you can suggest you make a 'safety plan' together. A 'safety plan' will lay out steps for coping in a crisis, and help them make sure they have the support they need going forwards.

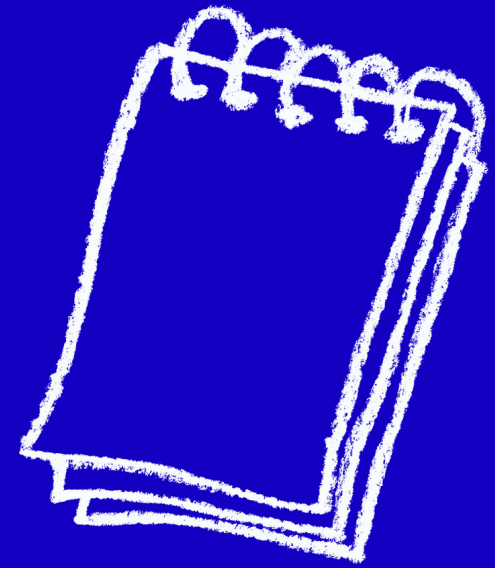
Download a [Safety Plan template](#)

## 2. Try to create a support network

You can't be there for someone all the time, so try to help them create a support network of friends and family that understand how they are feeling. Discuss with them how often you should check in with them. You could also reach out to peer support groups. [Have a look at the peer support groups we offer.](#)

## 3. Remember to look after yourself

Supporting someone who feels suicidal can be emotional and difficult at times. Make sure to look after your own wellbeing and seek support for yourself if needed.



# Where to go for more support

## **Samaritans**

Open 24/7 for anyone who needs to talk.

116 123

jo@samaritans.org

samaritans.org

## **Shout**

Confidential 24/7 text service offering support if you are in crisis and need immediate help.

85258 (text SHOUT)

giveusashout.org

## **Papyrus HOPELINEUK**

Confidential support for under-35s and others who are concerned about them. Open daily 9am–midnight.

0800 068 41 41 (call)

07860 039967 (text)

pat@papyrus-uk.org

papyrus-uk.org

## **Campaign Against Living Miserably (CALM)**

Provides listening services, information and support for anyone who needs to talk, including a web chat.

0800 58 58 58

thecalmzone.net

## **Solent Mind Support Line**

For help in knowing where to turn, access to our local crisis services or for wellbeing advice, give our support line a call.

023 8017 9049

Open 9am-7pm an weekdays and 10am-2pm on weekends.

