

What to do next

Here are some suggestions and sources of support. If at first you don't find the help you need, persist. Try all avenues and don't give up.

If someone tells you they're feeling suicidal...

- Make sure they're not left alone and ask them if they have a safety plan
- Remove anything they could use to take their own life, e.g. tablets, firearms, rope
- Get medical help immediately

Get medical help

- Phone your GP surgery (outside normal surgery hours, you'll be directed to an out-of-hours service)
- 'Call 999 if there's an immediate danger to life or take them to A&E and **stay with them until they are seen by a member of the mental health team**

Even if it's only a hunch, share your concerns with others

- Don't be afraid to involve their family, friends or colleagues
- Share this leaflet with others and plan together how you are going to keep the person safe

Take care of yourself

- Talk to your own GP about your feelings
- Confide in a trusted friend
- Find a support group for carers of people with mental health problems
- If the person does take their own life, please try not to feel guilty. It is not always possible to prevent suicide. Do seek support with how you're feeling.

Contact confidential helplines and sources of support

Samaritans

116 123 (24 hours, free to call) www.samaritans.org

PAPYRUS: Prevention of Young Suicide

0800 068 41 41 (Mon–Fri 10am–10pm; weekends 2pm–10pm; bank hols 2pm–5pm)
www.papyrus-uk.org

Crisis Resolution and Home Treatment Teams

0800 169 0398 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
www.ghc.nhs.uk/our-teams-and-services/crhtt

Gloucestershire Self Harm Helpline

0808 801 0606 Text: **07537 410 022**
Telephone, web chat, text 5pm to 10pm daily
www.gloucestershireselfharm.org/

Gloucestershire Support After Suicide Service (GSASS) - 07483 375 516

Email: glossupportaftersuicide@rethink.org

Stay Alive App

[www.prevent-suicide.org.uk/find-help-now/stay](http://www.prevent-suicide.org.uk/find-help-now/stay-alive-app)
-alive-app

An app for those at risk of suicide or those worried about someone else



CALM: Campaign Against Living Miserably (for men)

0800 58 58 58 (7 days a week, 5pm–midnight)
www.thecalmzone.net

SANE: Mental Health Helpline

0300 304 7000 (7 days a week 4.30pm–10.30pm)
www.sane.org.uk

MIND

0300 123 3393 (Mon–Fri 9am–6pm)
www.mind.org.uk

For further details of local support services, please visit: Your Circle www.yourcircle.org.uk

Online Training

- Zero Suicide Alliance – www.zerosuicidealliance.com
- Grassroots – www.prevent-suicide.org.uk/real-talk
- Health Education England – 'We need to talk about suicide' www.nwyhelearning.nhs.uk/elearning/HEE/SuicidePrevention/
- The Learning Pool – Suicide Prevention Awareness learningpool.com/suicide-prevention-awareness/

This leaflet was developed at the University of Exeter Medical School in collaboration with The Alliance of Suicide Prevention Charities (TASC, and was originally produced by Devon County Council.



To obtain copies of this leaflet, please email ghccomms@ghc.nhs.uk

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It's safe to talk about suicide



Does someone close to you seem really down? Might they be thinking about suicide? The only way to know is to ask

Suicide is rare, but...

- it happens
- there are over 6,000 deaths by suicide in the UK every year – an average of 16 per day.

Don't think: "It couldn't happen to us."
It can happen in any family.

Intense emotional strain and mental exhaustion can cause people to behave in uncharacteristic and unpredictable ways.

Don't think: "He's not the suicidal type."
There isn't one.

Some things that drive people to think about suicide are:

- Personal catastrophes, such as being made redundant, the collapse of their own business, the break-up of a relationship or being refused access to children
- A persistent sense of worthlessness or failure; uncertainty about sexual identity or personal goals
- Good things happening to other people, such as friends getting married, going off to university or getting new jobs, and feeling left behind
- A combination of the above. A whole series of little setbacks can sometimes be more devastating than one big thing.

What are the warning signs?

There may not be any. An emotional crisis is not like a heart attack or a stroke, where there are visible warning signs.

People who have reached rock bottom can be very skilled at hiding their thoughts and feelings.



They MAY be

- Quiet
- Brooding
- Withdrawn or distant
- Not making eye contact
- Agitated
- Irritable or rude
- Drinking a lot
- Talking about suicide or saying it's all hopeless

They may ALSO be

- Busy
- Chirpy
- Living life as normal
- Going to work
- Laughing and joking
- Talking about future plans
- Telling you not to worry about them

So how will you know if they're thinking about suicide?

The safest way is to ask them.

Why it's important to ask

If someone is suicidal, they are likely to be feeling:

- cut off from everyone around them
- frightened and ashamed about wanting to die
- desperate for help but afraid to ask.

They need someone to start the conversation for them. This shows them that they have permission to talk about it and that they don't have to wrestle with their dark and terrible thoughts alone.

Some common fears:

"Won't talking about suicide put the idea in her head?"

No. If a person is suicidal, the idea is already there. If they aren't suicidal, it won't do any harm.

"What if I say the wrong thing? It could damage our relationship."

Showing a person you care about them won't damage your relationship. Saying nothing could result in losing them forever.

It's important to trust your gut instincts. If something about the person doesn't look or feel right, say something.

Saying something is safer than saying nothing.

Saying the word won't make it happen.

What to say

It can be really scary starting this kind of conversation.

Step 1: Explore how they're feeling

If something bad has happened to them, ask, **"How has it made you feel?"** They may shrug and say, "I'm OK." If they don't seem OK to you, keep trying, quietly and gently.

Listen attentively. Try to keep the dialogue open by asking questions like, **"How bad is it?"** or **"What's that like?"**

Don't deny what they're telling you, and don't pretend you know how they feel.

I'm a totally useless person

✗

No you're not

✓

How long have you been feeling like that?

Step 2: Ask the 'S' question

If they give any indication that they're feeling hopeless or can't see the point in going on, ask clearly and calmly, **"Are you having any thoughts of suicide?"**

Don't be too quick to accept denials or joking responses

Don't worry, I am not going to top myself

✗

Phew, that's a relief

✓

We should still think about getting you some help