

Thank you for taking this important step towards support

This booklet is a suicide prevention resource packed full of useful information to help people stay safe.

You can use it if you are having thoughts of suicide or if you are concerned about someone else.



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Disclaimer

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www.prevent-suicide.org.uk

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Staying safe for now

If you are struggling with thoughts of suicide right now, recognise that you have choices.

As well as the choices of suicide or staying alive, you have a third choice; stay safe for now.

→ Reach out for support

Our Find Help Now section on pages 28 -33 offers numbers of organisations that want to support you.

Let someone know how bad things are and accept help.

→ Try not to be on your own

If at all possible, try to be with someone you trust, who knows that you are thinking about suicide, and who will help you stay safe for now.

You might also go to a place that feels safe, or a busy environment where you are not alone.

→ Try to keep yourself safe from vourself

This might mean removing planned methods of suicide or asking someone

This might also mean keeping yourself away from a location. Try to make your home a safe place.

→ Try to avoid alcohol or illegal drugs

They can make things worse by intensifying your feelings and making you more likely to behave impulsively.

anything you might use to harm

to help you with this.



SECTION 1

Thinking about suicide?

thoughts and feelings CAN change.

Section 1. Thinking about suicide?

Have a look at other parts of this booklet that could be helpful: Safety plan (page 9), Reasons for living (page 13) and Looking after yourself (page 8).

Wait. Decide not to do anything right now to hurt yourself. You do

attempt to solve what feels like an overwhelming set of problems.

not have to act on your thoughts of suicide. Suicidal behaviour is an

When we are struggling to cope, our mind closes down on creativity and our problem-solving skills become much more limited. Your

Talk to someone. You could talk to a friend or family member, or a support service of some kind. There are people who want to listen and who can help you - find out more on pages 28 - 33.



It has taken me three years but I finally spoke openly about my thoughts of suicide with a friend. I don't feel like I am dealing with this on my own anymore. I just wish I reached out sooner.

Tom



Grounding techniques

Making small changes to what you experience in the moment can help you deal with overwhelming anxiety, pain or emotions.

- → Do an activity that requires focus and attention, to help calm your mind and body.
- → Think about a safe place or activity from your life, that reminds you of a time when you felt safe and calm. Try to remember in your mind and body how that felt.
- → Breathe slowly and steadily from your belly, as best you can. Imagine letting go of pain as you breathe out.
- → Stroke your hands over your body. Be aware of the physical sensations, and verbally reassure yourself as you do this.
- → Pay attention to your senses: what can you see, hear, smell, taste or feel?
- → Move around, walking, stretching, bending, and focus on how your body feels during the movement.
- → **Hold** yourself and rock backwards and forwards gently.

- → Talk gently and kindly to yourself or read aloud.
- → Write down how you are feeling and what you are thinking.
- → Note down situations or events that might contribute to you thinking about suicide. Keeping track of these 'triggers' can help you think about how to respond to them.
- → Ask yourself what you have learned about your strengths and supports from a past crisis you may have experienced. For example, 'What did I learn from that situation that could help me now?'.
- → Imagine a friend is struggling with thoughts of suicide. How would you try to support them? What would you say to them? How would you show them that you care? Perhaps you can show some of the same kindness and compassion towards yourself.



Breathing

Focusing on our breath is one of the simplest ways we can help ourselves feel grounded or bring ourselves back into the present moment.

If it feels safe and comfortable to do so, you might find it useful to try the following exercise.

- Make yourself as comfortable as you can, sitting upright and loosening any clothes that restrict your breathing.
- 2. If possible, place your feet flat on the ground, roughly hip-width apart.
- 3. Let your breath flow as deep down into your belly as is comfortable, without forcing it.
- 4. Breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth.

- 5. Breathe in gently and regularly. Some people find it helpful to count steadily from one to five. You may not be able to reach five at first.
- 6. Then, without pausing or holding your breath, let it flow out gently, counting from one to five again, if you find this helpful.
- 7. Try this exercise for three to five minutes and notice how you feel afterwards.

7

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Tools for staying safe

If you are thinking about suicide, the tools on the following pages can help you stay safe.

You may find it helpful to complete these sections when you are feeling well and return to them in times of crisis.

Safety plan

Getting started

A Safety plan helps you recognise your warning signs that a suicidal crisis is beginning or escalating, and the actions you can take to stay safe. This includes ideas such as who to talk to, how to make your environment safer, ways to distract yourself, and support services you can access.

Here is some guidance to help you get the most from your Safety Plan:

$\, o \,$ Staying safe for now

If you feel unable to complete your own Safety plan right now, the 'Staying safe for now' page provides some ideas to help you keep safe. You can always come back to complete your Safety plan later.

→ Making it your own

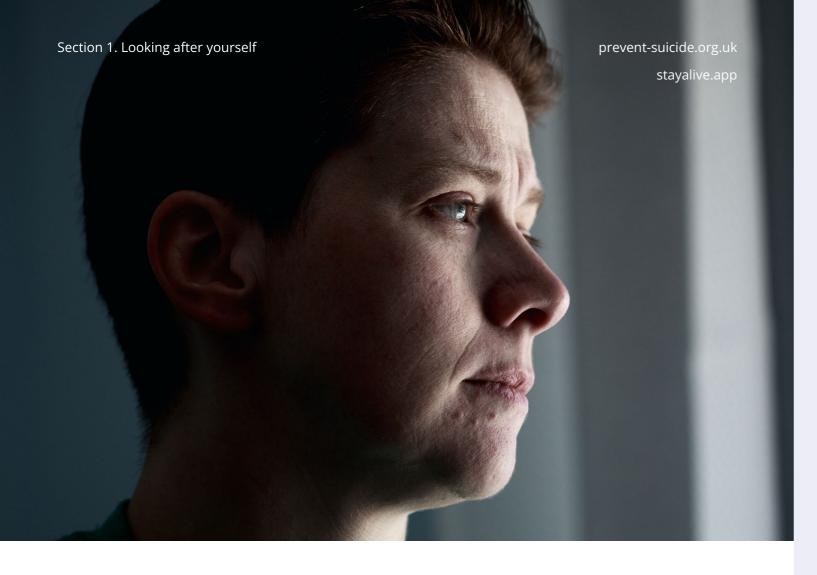
While it can be helpful to develop your Safety plan with someone you trust, it's important that you decide what goes in it, and what works for you. These ideas might change over time so regularly review your plan to keep it up-to-date.

→ Asking someone to help you

It can be helpful to work through the Safety plan with someone you trust. This could be a family member, friend, or key worker.

→ Sharing with others

It can be helpful to share this with relevant family, friends, or professionals who are helping to support you.



Looking after yourself

Trying to take care of yourself is important whether you are thinking about suicide or worried about someone else's thoughts of suicide.

Consciously taking care of yourself at difficult times can help you to cope with difficult or painful thoughts and feelings. Looking after yourself can also help you feel less exhausted or overwhelmed, and remind you that you deserve compassion and care, like we all do.

- → Eat well and nourish your body
- → Take some exercise that you enjoy
- → Enjoy a shower or bath
- → Try meditating
- → Watch a movie or some TV that you love
- → Take time to read something you are interested in

- → Plan an adventure of some kind, however small
- → Create something with your hands
- → Start a journal
- → Spend some time outdoors in nature
- → Go for a walk and take photos
- → Cook a good meal for yourself



You can fill out your own Safety plan on the following pages.

This is my Safety plan, where I keep my ideas for what to do in case of crisis. These ideas will help me stay safe from suicide.

These are warning signs that I may be struggling:



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e.g., not wanting to see anyone; drinking more than usual; feeling stressed at work

- → What thoughts, feelings, or behaviours happen before you start to have thoughts of suicide?
- → Do you know what may trigger these feelings?

I will calm myself by trying:



e.g., breathing exercises; listening to music; taking a walk; re-framing the situation

- → What can you do to distract yourself?
- → What has worked for you in the past?

Safety plan

I will go to my safe place:



e.g., home; a friend's house

- → Where do you feel the most safe?
- → Where can you go to distract yourself from your thoughts of suicide?

If I am struggling, I can talk to:



e.g., friends; family; a neighbour

- → Who would you feel able to talk to about how you're feeling?
- → Who has helped you in the past?
- → Try to think of three people to include so you have options.

Safety plan

In a crisis, I will seek help from these professionals or organisations:



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e.g., key worker; Samaritans; a counsellor

- → You can search and highlight support services in the Find Help Now section on pages 28 - 33.
- → If you are already receiving support from a professional or organisation, do you know how to contact them in a crisis?

My ideas for staying safe:



e.g., reducing access to alcohol; asking a friend to look after medication

- → How can you make it harder to act on any plans you might have for suicide?
- → Where can you put things you could use to harm yourself so they are harder to get to if you feel overwhelmed?

Reasons for living

These are my Reasons for living, important statements reminding me why I should stay alive.

Myself I care enough about myself to live I have the courage to face life I want to experience all that life has to offer and there are many experiences I haven't had yet which I want to have	 No matter how badly I feel I know that it will not last I believe I can learn to adjust or cope with my problems I am afraid of the unknown 	0
Hope and beliefs I have hope that things will improve and the future will be happier I believe I can find other solutions to my problems I believe I can find a purpose in life, a reason to live	I am curious about what will happen in the future Life is all we have and is better than nothing	0
Understanding my choices I believe killing myself would not really accomplish or solve anything I do not want to die	 I believe I have control over my life and destiny I am afraid of the actual 'act' of killing myself 	0
Family and friends I love and enjoy my family and friends too much and could not leave them	I am worried my family and friends might believe I did not love them	0

Reasons for living

These are my own Reasons For Living, important statements reminding me why I should stay alive.

My own reasons for living



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LifeBox



This is my LifeBox where I can write down memories that are important to me, keep a journal of things I feel grateful for, or even keep photos of things that I love.

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LifeBox



This is my LifeBox where I can write down memories that are important to me, keep a journal of things I feel grateful for, or keep photos of things that I love.

Wellness plan

This is my Wellness Plan, where I keep my ideas for things that support my wellness.

In my experience these are the things that support my wellness and work for me:

In my experience these are the people who inspire me and remind me of my values:

I would like to try these things to support my wellness:



Misconceptions about suicide

Knowing the facts about suicide can help you better understand how to support yourself or others.

The following pages address some of the most common misconceptions about suicidal thoughts and behaviour.

Common misunderstandings and misconceptions about suicide

These are some misconceptions some people may have about people with suicidal ideation.

might put the idea in someone's head.

It is safer to ask about suicide than not to ask about suicide. Research shows that it is not dangerous to ask.

If the answer is yes, the person with thoughts of suicide can be supported. If the answer is no, then no harm has been done.

People often find great relief in being able to openly talk about their thoughts and feelings about suicide.

Suicide is a mental health issue.

Not always, though depression and mood disorders can often be present. Suicide is extremely complex.

Many people with suicidal ideation may have a combination of factors that have built up such as individuals dealing with loss, financial problems, loneliness, bullying, chronic pain or stress at work.

It is important not to miss those people who do not have mental health issues.

It is weak or selfish to choose suicide.

People who attempt suicide have often been struggling with feelings of pain, despair, hopelessness, worthlessness or other overwhelming feelings for a long time.

They may believe that suicide is the only way out and be unable to see beyond their intense thoughts and feelings. They want their pain to end, not their lives.

It is best to avoid the topic of suicide as it Talking about suicide is attention seeking behaviour.

Anyone considering suicide needs serious attention. They are in pain and may feel hopeless.

Most people who die by suicide have talked about it to someone first; we should always take seriously anyone talking about suicide. It is safer overreacting than under-reacting to someone you may suspect to be at risk.

Paying attention to suicidal statements can save lives.

Most suicides happen with no warning.

Most people struggling with thoughts of suicide find a way to communicate that they need help, sometimes at an unconscious level.

These warning signs can sometimes be subtle, and can be missed, dismissed or avoided.

It is important to be alert to potential warning signs and be prepared to ask about suicide if you are concerned about someone.

Common misunderstandings and misconceptions about suicide

These are some misconceptions someone may have about their own suicidal thoughts.

I am a burden on people, especially my loved ones. They will be far better off without me.

Suicide has a profound and devastating impact on people and communities left behind. Many loved ones will live with guilt and confusion for the rest of their lives.

Suicide is not your only option. Reaching out and asking for help is an act of courage, not failure and so many people will want to help you stay safe for now, rather than regret not having the chance to help.

My thoughts of suicide will always be with me.

For many of us, feeling suicidal is an experience that lasts for a limited time.

Our intense thoughts and feelings can change from moment to moment, hour to hour. With help and support your feelings can change and recover.

Some people, however, may continue to have times in their life when they consider suicide, and extra support is needed.

My suicidal feelings are rare and unusual.

It is quite common, one in five people have thought of taking their own life.

In the UK, one in fifteen people are estimated to have tried to take their life at some point.

Anyone has the potential to have thoughts of suicide. What is important to remember is that you can recover from suicidal thoughts.

If I have thoughts of suicide of suicide I am mentally ill.

Many people who have thoughts of suicide do not have a mental illness, such as depression. If you are concerned about your mental health or thoughts of suicide it can help to see a GP (family doctor).

If you have depression there may be medication or counselling that could help you. Your GP can also address any underlying physical health issues.

Suicide is an easy and painless relief for suffering.

People may perceive suicide as painless because they anticipate it will bring relief to their own unbearable mental or emotional pain. Dying by suicide is not easy.

Many suicide attempts are not fatal and can leave the person with permanent damage to their body and/or brain. Research shows that many people who survive a suicide say that they experienced regret during the attempt.



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Potential warning signs

You may have noticed that someone is not behaving as they normally would, or have the feeling that something is not right with that person.

People who are thinking about suicide often find ways to let us know that they need help, whether they are doing this consciously or not. We could call these 'warning signs'.

Here are some potential warning signs that might let you know that someone is thinking about suicide:

1. Actions

Giving possessions away, writing a will, behaving in risky ways, becoming withdrawn, increasing use of drugs or alcohol, stockpiling pills.

2. Talking about

Feeling that people would be better off without them, that their life has no purpose, saying that they would be better off dead, wanting a way out of pain or a difficult situation.

3. Life situation involving loss or stress

Abuse of some kind, bereavement, relationship breakdown, failing exams, rejection, financial difficulties.

We can all help people who are thinking about suicide. It is ordinary members of our community who have helped me most. You don't need to be a professional or do anything extraordinary. Open conversations about suicide and listening are the most powerful tools we have and can save lives.

Ben



SECTION 4

Section 4. Worried about someone?

Worried about someone?

We don't often talk about suicide so it might seem a little daunting to start a conversation about it, but it's important to remember you don't have to be an expert.

The following pages offer some guidance on how to help someone at risk of suicide.



Don't forget

No list is complete, and people are very individual.

Be alert to changes in someone that might cause you to be worried. Any of these 'warning signs' might not be connected with thoughts of suicide.

The only way to be sure whether someone is thinking about suicide is to ask.

Practical steps to help

Be alert. Not everyone who thinks about suicide will tell someone, but there may be warning signs.

Be honest if you are worried about someone. Tell them what your concerns are and let them know that you care about them. Give them time and space to talk about how they are feeling right now.

If you feel that this person may be considering suicide, ask them directly if they are thinking about suicide. This can be a daunting question, but it is safe to ask and helps both of you to be clear about the situation. Asking about suicide shows that you care enough to want to know how someone really is and gives them permission to talk honestly about a difficult and stigmatised subject.

There are many ways to ask a clear, direct question about suicide. Here are a few examples:

The things you've been saying make me wonder if you're thinking about suicide. Is that how you're feeling right now?

Have things got so bad that you are thinking about suicide? **▶▶**



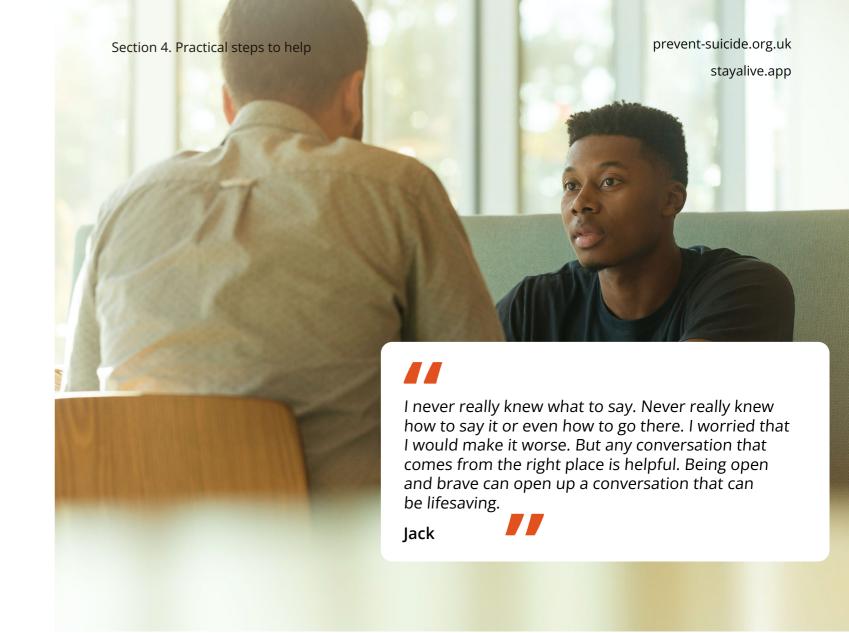
Sometimes when people talk about the feelings/situations you've been describing, they're thinking about suicide. Are you thinking about suicide?



Use your own way to ask

The most important thing is that the question is clear and direct, so that you can both be clear about the answer.

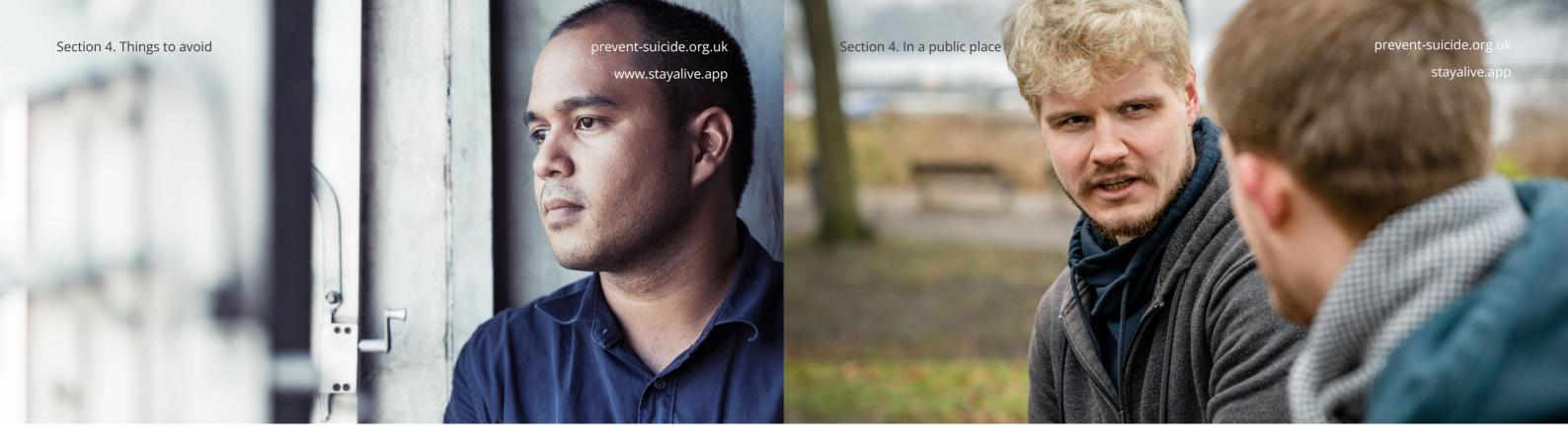
Asking is safer than not asking, and asking someone about suicide doesn't make it more likely that they will attempt suicide - quite the reverse.



Listen without judgement to help them talk

Just having someone to listen to their thoughts and feelings with compassion and patience can help people feel less alone and less overwhelmed.

- → Help the person to get help. It's OK if you don't know how; the ideas on pages 28 33 can help you get started.
- → Find out what kind of help they would appreciate. It might not be from a professional service but could be a friend, family member, partner or other trusted person.
- → Help them stay safe while help is being arranged.
- → Take care of yourself. It is important that you look after your own wellbeing too. You may find it helpful to discuss your feelings with a friend, or a confidential service.



Things to avoid

When talking to someone about suicide listening is one of the most helpful things you can do.

It can be important to remember that it's not your responsibility to change the person's mind about suicide. Know that just being there will help.

- Telling the person why you think they should stay alive (listening is much more helpful).
- Trying to fix the person's problems or offering solutions to their feelings.
- Trying to cheer the person up or distract them from their thoughts of suicide.
- Saying 'I know how you feel'.
- ☑ Judging the person or their experience.
- Panicking.
- ② Denying their feelings.



Learn more

To find out more about further suicide prevention training options, and Grassroots Suicide Prevention's work visit the Suicide Prevention Hub:

www.prevent-suicide.org.uk/prevention-hub

In a public place

You may see someone in a public place who you think is at risk of suicide. If it is safe for you to do so, try to follow these steps:

- Send someone else to get help if possible.
- Engage the person in conversation.
- Help them stay safe while help is being arranged.
- Don't be afraid to ask if they're thinking about suicide.
- Listen without judgement and help them talk about what has brought them to this point.

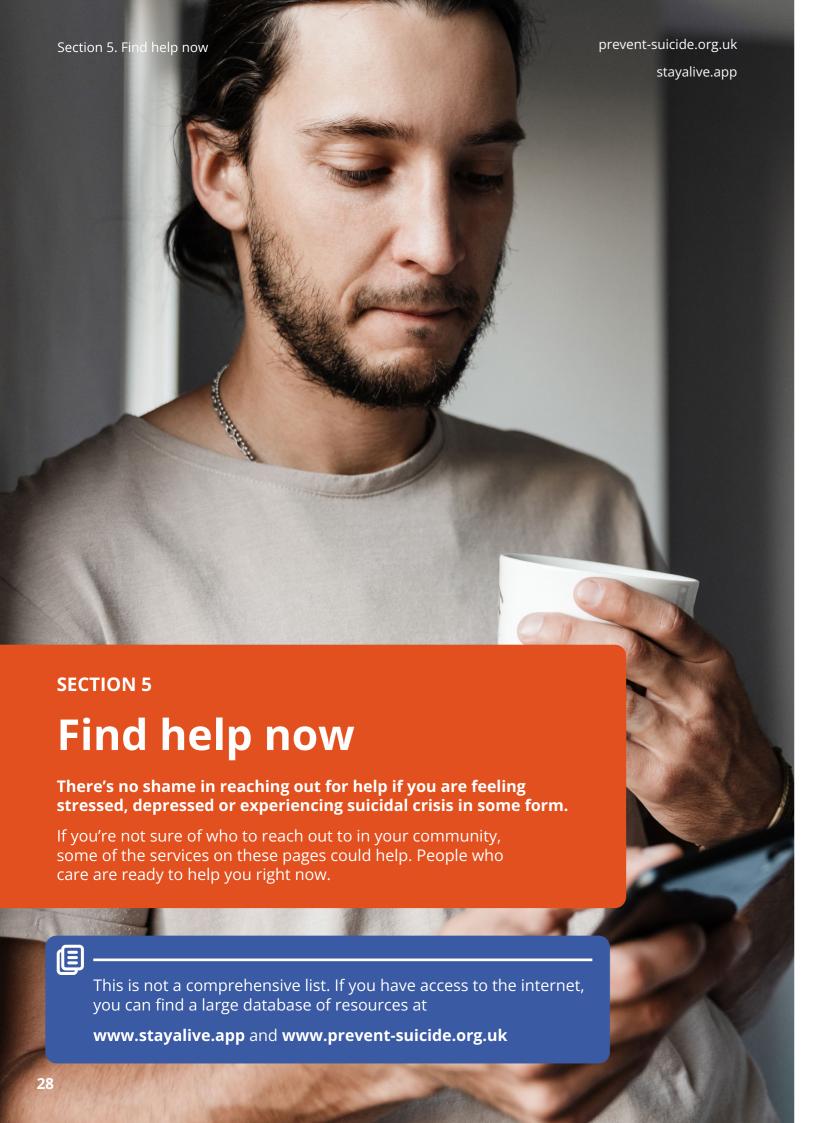
- Reassure them help is available and offer to contact a helpline if they would like you to do this. See the 'Find help now' section on pages 28 - 36
- Stay with them until help is in place.
- Keep yourself safe. Never endanger your safety to help someone else.



I think the hardest thing was not wanting to make things worse and that stopped me talking to someone I was worried about. I want people to know, it is okay to share your concerns and it helped my friend stay alive.

Charlie





National crisis lines

If you or someone you know has taken steps to end their life, or is in immediate danger please call 999.

You can also visit or call your nearest Accident and Emergency (A&E) department and tell the staff team that you are thinking about suicide, or with a person who is thinking about suicide.

NHS 111

Anyone feeling distressed, in crisis, or concerned about someone can call and select the mental health option to speak to a trained mental health professional.

- → Call 111
- → Open 24/7 every day

Samaritans

Providing emotional support to anyone in distress, struggling to cope, or at risk of suicide.

- → Call 116 123
- → Open 24/7 every day
- → Visit samaritans.org

Sane

National out-of-hours helpline offering specialist emotional support, guidance and information to anyone affected by mental illness, including family, friends and carers.

- → Call 0300 304 7000
- → 4pm to 10pm every day
- → Visit samaritans.org

Shout

Text service for those worried about their mental health or are struggling to cope.

- → Text 85258
- → Open 24/7 every day

HOPELINE247

Confidential support and advice service for children and young people under the age of 35 who are experiencing thoughts of suicide, or anyone concerned about them.

- → Call 08000 684 141
- → Text 88247
- → Open 24/7

CALM

For people in the UK who are down or have hit a wall for any reason, who need to talk or find information and support.

- → Call 0800 58 58 58
- → 5pm to midnight every day

National Suicide Prevention Helpline UK

Compassionate and understanding lifeline for those struggling with their mental wellbeing or thoughts of suicide.

- → Call 0800 689 5652
- → Open 6pm midnight every day

SOS Helpline

Support for anyone aged 12+ who may be thinking about suicide or are in crisis.

- → Call 0808 115 1505
- → Open 8pm midnight weekdays and 4pm - midnight weekends

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Further support

Age

Age UK

Support, advocacy, information and activities for older people.

- → Advice line: 0800 678 1602
- → Open 8am 7pm every day

Hourglass

Hourglass confidential helpline provides information and support to anyone concerned about harm, abuse or exploitation of an older person.

- → Call 0808 808 8141
- → Open 24/7

The Silver Line

Free helpline providing information, friendship and advice for those 55+.

- → Call 0800 470 8090
- → Open 24/7

Bereavement

Cruse Bereavement

Helpline offering emotional support to anyone affected by bereavement.

- → Call 0800 808 1677
- → Open weekdays 9:30am 5pm

Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide

Advice, support and groups for those bereaved by suicide.

- → Call 0300 111 5065
- → Open 9am 7pm every day

Drug & alcohol recovery

Addiction Family Support

A safe space for people affected or bereaved by a loved one's harmful use of alcohol, drugs or gambling.

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- → Call 0300 888 3853
- → Open 9am 9pm every day

Talk to Frank

Friendly and confidential support about drugs

- → Call 0300 123 6600
- → Open 24/7

We Are With You

An online chat service to speak about drugs, alcohol or your mental health

- → Visit wearewithyou.org.uk
- → Open 9am 9pm weekdays and 10am, -4pm weekends

Domestic or sexual violence

National Rape Crisis Line

Offering confidential emotional support, information and referral details.

- → Call 0808 500 2222
- → Open 24/7

Victim Support

A confidential helpline for those who have experienced domestic abuse, regardless of when it took place.

- → Call 08 08 16 89 111
- → Open 24/7

Further support

Eating disorders

BEAT Eating Disorders

Support for people who have or are worried they have an eating disorder, as well as others affected.

- → Call 0808 801 0677
- → Open weekdays 3pm 8pm

Finances

Citizens Advice

Providing free confidential and impartial advice on big issues affecting people's lives.

- → Call Adviceline (England) 0800 144 8848
- → Call Adviceline (Wales) 0800 702 2020

National Debtline

If you are struggling with debt, call a debt expert for free impartial advice.

- → Call 0808 808 4000
- → Open 9am 8pm weekdays and 9:30am
 1pm Saturday

Housing

Shelter

Providing free confidential and impartial advice on big issues affecting people's lives.

- → Call 0808 800 4444
- → Open 8am 6pm weekdays

Gambling

BigDeal

A place for young people to get information, advice, and guidance about gambling. Provides support to parents and professionals.

- → Call 0808 8020 133
- → WhatsApp chat 020 3031 8881
- → Open 24/7

Gamble Aware

Non-judgemental and confidential support for anyone affected by gambling.

- → Call 0808 8020 133
- → Open 24/7

Gamcare

Free information, advice and support for anyone affected by problem gambling.

- → Call 0808 8020 133
- → Open Monday to Thursday 9:30am 8pm

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Further support

LGBTO+

Galop

Supporting LGBTQ+ People who have experienced abuse and violence.

- → Call 0800 999 5428
- → Open Monday to Thursday 9:30am -8pm

LGBT Foundation

A friendly, non-judgemental service helping to connect you to further support.

- → Call 0345 3 303030
- → Open 9am 8:30pm weekdays and 10am - 5:30pm weekends

Switchboard - LGBT+

National switchboard for LGBT+ advice.

- → Call 0800 0119 100
- → Open 10am 10pm every day

Mental Health

Mind

Providing a network of local services across the UK. Infoline offering an information and signposting service.

- → Call 0300 123 3393
- → Open 9am 6pm weekdays

Rethink Mental Illness

A network of groups, services and advice lines across England

→ Visit rethink.org

Migrant support

Migrant Help UK

Providing support for those seeking asylum and protecting those affected by displacement and exploitation.

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- → Call 0800 8010 503
- → Open 24/7

Prison and prison leavers

Unlock

Support for prisoners, prison leavers and those with convictions.

- → Call 01634 247350
- → Open weekdays 8:45am 4:45pm

Self harm

Self Injury Support

Support for people of any age and gender who are impacted by self-injury in any way.

- → Call 0808 800 8088
- → Text 07537 432 444

Further support

Veterans

Combat Stress UK

Mental health support for veterans.

- → Call 0800 138 1619
- → Open 24/7

Veterans Aid

Providing immediate, practical support to all ex-servicemen and women who are homeless, facing homelessness or in crisis.

- → Call 0800 012 6867
- → Open weekdays 9am 3pm

Veterans Gateway

Get veteran focused information, advice and support.

- → Call 0808 802 1212
- → Open 24/7

Young people

Childline

Childline is here to help anyone under 19 in the UK with any issue they're going through, big or small.

- → Call 0800 1111
- → Open 24/7

Kooth

Provides online mental health support for children and young people with access to professional help from qualified counsellors.

→ Visit kooth.org

The Mix

Support and advice helpline for under 25s.

- → Text 'THEMIX' to 85258
- → Open 24/7

Papyrus

Providing a Hopeline for children and young people under 35 who are experiencing thoughts of suicide or anyone concerned for someone else.

- → Call 0800 068 4141
- → Open 24/7

Young Minds

Text support service and advice for young people.

- → Text 'SHOUT' to 85258
- → Open 24/7
- → Parents call 0808 802 5544
- → Open weekdays 9:30am 4pm

My contacts



Thinking about suicide? Worried about someone?

This booklet is a suicide prevention resource packed full of useful information and tools to help you or someone you care about stay safe.

If you or someone you know has taken steps to end their life, or is in immediate danger, please call **999**.

There are trained people who care and want to help anyone struggling with difficult feelings.

NHS 111

Anyone feeling distressed, in crisis, or concerned about someone can call and select the mental health option to speak to a trained mental health professional.

- → Call 111
- → Open 24/7

Samaritans

Providing emotional support to anyone in distress, struggling to cope, or at risk of suicide.

- → Call 116 123
- → Open 24/7

You can find contact details for further organisations who are able to offer support on pages 28 - 33.

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