

Talking about SUICIDAL THOUGHTS

A mini-guide to help support yourself or anyone you know with suicidal thoughts

Understanding suicidal thoughts

Keeping yourself safe

Ideas to help

Communicating about suicidal thoughts

Websites, helplines and local support

This mini support guide has been informed and created by young people touched by this difficult subject.

We hope it will help you to reach out and keep safe if you're feeling suicidal or having suicidal thoughts. Or, if you are worried that someone you care about is having suicidal thoughts, we hope this guide will give you the encouragement needed to simply start a conversation.

Visit www.ymcaRightHere.com for more information.

In an emergency
DIAL 999
immediately

This guide was produced by:



YMCA RIGHT HERE
Young people promoting health and wellbeing through education, campaigning and influencing

YMCA DOWNSLINK GROUP

Working in partnership with:



UNDERSTANDING SUICIDE AND SUICIDAL THOUGHTS

Suicidal thoughts can feel very overwhelming and scary, but they're actually quite common. Research suggests that around 1 in 4 young people (between the ages of 16-34) experience feelings of suicide at some point. Thinking about suicide doesn't mean you have a mental health condition.

Thoughts of suicide can be a symptom of some mental health conditions, such as depression or borderline personality disorder, but suicidal feelings aren't a mental health condition on their own. However, it is more common for people with mental health conditions to think about suicide – the reasons for this are quite complicated – but many people who think about suicide will have no existing mental health conditions at all.

REASONS BEHIND SUICIDAL THINKING

So many people worry that because they are thinking about suicide, this must mean they are crazy. It is important to reassure yourself that you are not crazy. People think about suicide for a lot of different reasons. Sometimes, but not always, it's because they feel it's the only escape from a seemingly impossible situation or a feeling that they can't imagine ever getting better. There is nothing crazy about that. Sometimes there are circumstances or situations that might act as a trigger for suicidal thoughts or feelings. These could include loss of a loved one, breakdown of a relationship, money worries, difficult times at work or school, being unwell, or being bullied. Unfortunately, those who identify as LGBTQ+ are much more likely to report suicidal feelings. There is specialised support available if you are LGBTQ+ having difficulties.

The reasons behind feeling suicidal are different for everyone and no reason is more or less valid. Sometimes alcohol or drugs can act as a trigger for suicidal behaviour as these also can lower inhibitions and make people act in more risky ways. So, you may want to think about whether to avoid things or situations that might trigger thoughts of suicide and aim to seek help.

SOMEONE I CARE ABOUT FEELS SUICIDAL

There is no one right way to talk to someone if they're feeling suicidal, or if you're worried they're feeling suicidal. Just ask how they are feeling. Start the conversation, listen and support. Be open and understanding. Use positive language and try to avoid making the person feel guilty or belittled. It is okay to use direct language. In fact, most people who have suicidal thoughts are actually relieved when someone asks them directly if they are having suicidal thoughts. Don't be scared that talking about suicide will lead to suicidal thoughts. If you want to start the conversation, it can be important to choose the time wisely. Try to find a time when you know you will not be in a hurry. Although, if the conversation comes up in the moment, it's best to try not to put it off, if you can. Remember that it is important to look after yourself too. It's okay to speak to someone else so that you are not feeling totally responsible for this person. You can't necessarily fix someone's problems – and that's okay! Ultimately, it is going to come down to the person who feels suicidal to make their own decisions. Don't ever feel scared that you didn't do enough for someone who felt suicidal. And remember that you can seek help for yourself too.

Visit www.bit.ly/RHWorried to find out more.

KEEPING YOURSELF SAFE IF YOU ARE FEELING SUICIDAL

It is important to really think about how you are going to keep yourself safe when feelings become overwhelming. This will be different for everyone. Have a look at some of the ideas below or talk it out with someone you trust and write your mini safety plan or download the StayAlive app.

Coping strategies

Sometimes, we feel so overwhelmed that we do things that cause us harm as a way to cope. Short term coping strategies can be useful to help replace harmful behaviour but still get a similar result. Papyrus have a list of suggested strategies. Go to: www.bit.ly/RHCoping

Distraction techniques

Remember that like any thoughts we have, thoughts of suicide will pass. Some people have suggested that finding something to distract yourself for 10-15 minutes can help the thoughts pass quicker. Go to www.bit.ly/RHDistraction for ideas.

Practical stuff

Sometimes suicidal feelings can surface because of feeling overwhelmed by a number of different things in our lives. It could be a build-up of lots of seemingly 'little' worries or concerns which can become tricky to cope with. If this is the case, it might help the feelings subside if you are able to deal with the things you need to address. You could write a list of all the things and talk to someone to discuss how you might start to find resolutions. For more specific support services: Bit.ly/Finditout

Longer term help

If you find that, despite your efforts, your suicidal thoughts and/or feelings are persistent over time, it might be helpful to seek some ongoing support. This could be a talking therapy, online counselling or drug treatment. Speak to your GP or someone else for help. You can visit findgetgive.com to find mental health services.

MY SAFETY PLAN

If I feel that I cannot stay safe from suicide:

I will talk to:

on:

I will seek help from:

I will calm myself by:

I will go to my safe space at:

My ideas to keep myself safe are:

Sometimes, it helps to spend some time reminding yourself of the reasons you have to stay alive. There are so many different reasons for living. Write down some of yours in this thought cloud...



Download the StayAlive app for more information and support
Go to: bit.ly/RHStayAlive



"I'm glad I didn't go through with my plans. It took some time, but after seeking help, I feel in a much better place now."

"The relief of the word 'suicide' being out in the open was just so great. It meant I could talk much more freely about how I felt."

List three people or services you will contact if you need to talk:

Name:

Number:

Name:

Number:

Name:

Number:

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This mini-guide contains **practical advice, services and digital help** to keep yourself or someone you know safe if you or they are feeling suicidal or having suicidal thoughts.

It has been created by young volunteers (aged 16-25) at **YMCA Right Here**, who have talked to others about their **experience, perceptions and beliefs** of suicidal thoughts. This guide is for young people, professionals and parents/carers.

We hope this guide **raises awareness**, provides **useful information** and gets people talking more openly about suicidal thoughts.

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SEEKING HELP

If you are having suicidal thoughts or feelings the best thing you can do is seek support. It is important to realise that people around you will want you to ask for help. It may not feel like it at times, but things can and will improve and communicating about our feelings is the best way to start that process.

There is no one right way to get help; maybe you wish to speak to someone you know, maybe someone you've never met, or maybe a medical professional. Speak to a person you trust. If you're not sure who, use our Support Services section to find services to get in touch with. If you are worried about speaking to your GP visit docready.org For further information, visit: bit.ly/RHSeekingHelp

IN AN EMERGENCY

If you do not feel that you are able to keep yourself safe right now, seek immediate help. Go to any hospital A&E department. Call 999 and ask for an ambulance if you can't get yourself there. Maybe you are able to call someone close to you who can help you, or just be with you.

What would happen if I call 999? It's not always the same. If you call 999 you will need to ask for an ambulance and explain to the operator, as clearly as you can, how you are feeling and what risks there are around you. The operator will ask questions and, if possible, arrange the most appropriate support. This may not always be an ambulance.

What happens at A&E? Once registered at A&E you will wait to be assessed by a member of the psychiatric team. After a wait, you will be seen by a trained professional who will work with you to make a plan to keep you safe. This will include a judgement on whether you will be best supported by care in the community or in hospital.

CONFIDENTIALITY

If you speak to a friend about your feelings, it could be a good idea to work together to decide who else to tell who could offer support: maybe an adult you know or a service. If you tell a professional that you are a risk to yourself they will need to speak to another professional about it, but they will try to talk to you about doing this first. They need to do this to ensure that you can be helped properly. Details will not be shared with people who don't need to know them. If someone shares their worries about you, remember it is coming from a place of care.

Helpful information about confidentiality:
bit.ly/RHConfidentiality

WHAT IS SECTIONING?

Sometimes talking to a professional can seem daunting. And one thing that people often worry about is whether they will get sectioned or 'locked up' if they tell a health professional they're feeling suicidal. Sectioning is when you are kept in hospital, even if you don't want to be there, to keep you or other people safe. **We want to reassure you that it is unlikely you will be sectioned.** There are so many different scenarios so it's difficult to give examples, but there are circumstances where sectioning is the safest option. Remember, your health professional will want to help in a way that offers you the most choice and freedom over your care. If a health professional wants you to be admitted to hospital you will often be given the option to go there yourself (usually called voluntary admission). If your GP thinks you need to be sectioned, they will usually need to contact specially trained mental health practitioners to assess you before you go into hospital. If you feel that you will be best supported for treatment in hospital, you should talk to your GP about referral. Find out more at www.bit.ly/RHMindSectioning

SUPPORT SERVICES

There's no wrong or right person to talk to about suicidal feelings. There are lots of services around West Sussex that you can access if you are, or someone you know is, feeling suicidal.

CRISIS: For Immediate Support These are available 24hrs a day!

- ▶ Call Samaritans on Freephone **116 123**
- ▶ Call NHS **111** to speak to an NHS advisor
- ▶ Call the Sussex Mental Health Rapid Response service **0300 304 0078**

Find help near you

- ▶ www.findgetgive.com
- ▶ At your local Find It Out Centre Bit.ly/Finditout
- ▶ Dialogue Counselling www.ymcadlg.org/health-and-wellbeing/dialogue
- ▶ Chat Health - Text for emotional support with a school nurse **07480 635424** for 11-19
- ▶ Kooth Online Counselling www.kooth.com
- ▶ (YES) Youth Emotional Support www.bit.ly/YESWestSussex
- ▶ Coastal West Sussex Mind www.coastalwestsussexmind.org **01903 277000**

More Support

- ▶ HOPELineUK - **0800 068 41 41**
- ▶ Papyrus Young People's Suicide Prevention and Help www.papyrus-uk.org
- ▶ Grassroots Suicide Prevention www.prevent-suicide.org.uk
- ▶ Stay Alive Suicide Prevention App bit.ly/RHStayAlive
- ▶ CALM (aimed at men) thecalmzone.net
- ▶ Mind UK's Online Support, Elefriends bit.ly/MindOnlineSupport

Don't forget the people around you who you feel you can trust:

- ▶ Friends or family
- ▶ Your GP or counsellor
- ▶ Any school/college staff

Hand this part of the guide to someone you trust so that they can start the conversation with you. You might want to pop your name at the bottom.

'I need to talk to you about suicidal feelings'

'I am worried about...'

Before talking to the person who gave you this note, you can access the full guide at bit.ly/RHSuicidalthoughts

IF YOU HAVE BEEN HANDED THIS...

Someone wants to talk to you about suicide or suicidal feelings. Try not to feel overwhelmed as there is lots of support out there to help.

Remember, there is no single right way to go about starting a conversation, but you can visit www.bit.ly/RHConversation for ideas on how to get started.

Check out the full guide online to find support services that can help bit.ly/RHSuicidalthoughts

It is **Okay** to ask **directly** about **suicide**. You will **not** put the **idea** into someone's head!

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