

# Let's Talk About Suicidal Thoughts

We all struggle with our mental health at times, and experiencing suicidal thoughts can feel scary and confusing. However, you are not alone and help is out there.

This guide, co-produced with young people, aims to help you talk safely about suicide, learn more about why suicidal thoughts can happen, and find the right support for you.

Many of us experience **feelings** of suicide, and having these **thoughts** doesn't always mean you are suicidal. Sometimes people think about suicide because it feels like the only way to **escape** from a **seemingly impossible** situation or feeling. Often it can be a sign that we are **struggling** with something, and are **in need** of some support.

**Remember: it's OK to ask for help.**

**Need urgent support?  
Find help by clicking here:**



## Understanding suicidal thoughts

Suicidal thoughts are common and many young people experience them during difficult times. There can be many reasons for this, but it's important to know that most people, with the right support, can start to feel better and have hope once again about the future.

A few reasons a person may have suicidal thoughts could include:

- Experiencing mental health difficulties such as depression
- Struggling with loneliness or feeling isolated
- Relationship difficulties (e.g. problems in the family)
- Academic pressure (e.g. at school or college)
- Losing a loved one (e.g. a family member or pet)
- Struggling with your gender or sexual identity
- Experiencing a recent trauma
- Being bullied or abused
- Experiencing financial worries



No matter what you are going through, experiencing suicidal thoughts doesn't mean you're 'going crazy';

**you are not alone,  
and help is out there.**

## Who can be affected by suicidal thoughts?



Anyone can experience suicidal thoughts, and there is no 'one size fits all' when it comes to mental health. A person may be going through an ongoing difficult time, or they may be struggling due to a sudden change or life event.

However, there can be certain triggers (e.g. using drugs or alcohol) that can make suicidal thoughts feel more overwhelming, and cause us to make more risky choices. It may be helpful to try and avoid or limit drug/alcohol intake if you are feeling vulnerable, and talk to someone you trust.



## How can I cope with these thoughts?

Experiencing suicidal thoughts can feel confusing, scary, and overwhelming. Although these thoughts may not disappear automatically, there are some things that help to calm, or distract from suicidal thoughts. This can then allow us space to seek further support and get the help we need.

### Things that can help to calm suicidal thoughts:

- Talking to someone you trust (e.g. partner or friend)
- Writing your feelings down or saying them out loud
- Reminding yourself of reasons to stay alive and things you can look forward to
- Trying some distraction techniques or safer alternatives if you are thinking of self-harming
- Getting some fresh air or practising mindfulness
- Reaching out for support from a helpline

Find self-harm resources, support, and advice at:



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.



## I want to reach out; who can I speak to?

Talking about suicidal thoughts, and acknowledging they are there, can often help them feel more manageable. When you want to speak to someone, it's important that it's with someone you trust and feel comfortable with.

### You could reach out to:

- A family member or partner
- A friend or colleague
- A youth worker or mentor
- A teacher or support worker
- Your GP or a counsellor
- A helpline (e.g. Samaritans)



The person you reach out to may need to help you speak to someone else, such as a health professional. This is to make sure you are safe and get the best possible support.





Sometimes it can be difficult to know how to talk about suicidal thoughts. Here are some conversation starters that could help you get talking:

**If you are having suicidal thoughts...**

- "I've been having thoughts about suicide and I don't know why."
- "I'm finding life really difficult right now, and I need some support."
- "I want to reach out but I'm not sure where to start."
- "I don't want to die, but I'm struggling to cope at the moment."
- "Can you help me contact some support services?"


**If someone tells you they're having suicidal thoughts...**

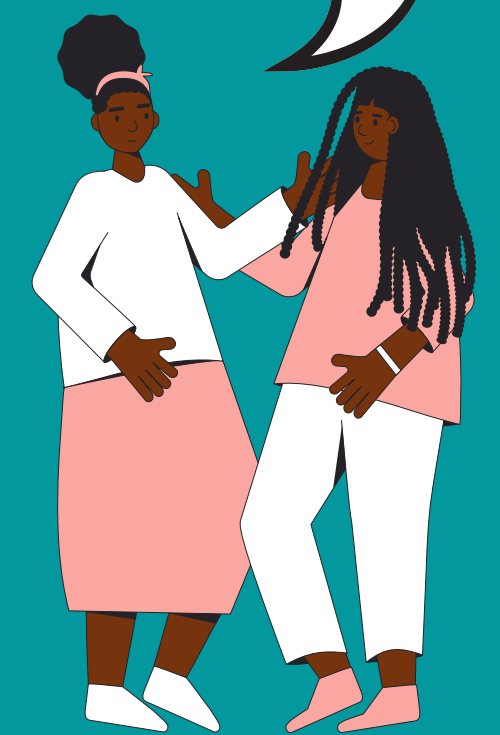
- "I'm glad you've told me how you're feeling."
- "Is there anything I can do to help?"
- You're not alone, and I am here for you."
- "Do you have coping techniques or a safety plan?"
- "You are important and it's OK to ask for help."
- "There are lots of ways to get the support you need - we can look at options together if you like?"

# What happens in an emergency?

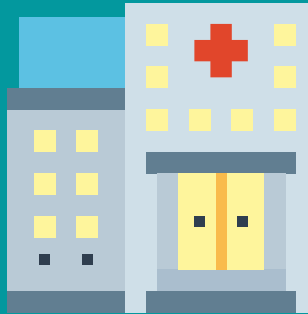
If you go into hospital, you'll be seen by a trained mental health professional who can work with you to make a plan to help keep you safe. They will help you decide what support is best for you; this could be at home, through a local service, or (in some cases) by staying in hospital.

It may feel scary to seek support, especially if you're worried about other people finding out how you're feeling. However, health professionals are there to help you get the best possible support.

  
If you have done something that could be life-threatening, or have injuries that need medical treatment, call 999 or go to your nearest A&E and someone will help you.



## What is 'Sectioning'?



'Sectioning' is when you are kept in hospital for your safety, even if you may not want to be there. There are many different scenarios and reasons why it may be the safest option for someone, and this will only happen on very rare occasions when it is the best way for that person to get the help they need.

## Seeking further help and advice

When you feel ready to ask for help, it's important to do what feels right for you. There are lots of different options depending on what you feel comfortable with, and a good place to start can be speaking to your GP. They can give you information about local support services, counselling, or medication if this is the best option for you.



You can also download the **#StayAlive** app for lots of helpful resources and tips for how to stay safe.



Other ways you could find further help and advice could be:

- **Speaking to someone you trust** - you could try having a regular time to speak on the phone or go for a walk together
- **Joining a local support or community group** - it can be helpful to speak to others who may have had similar experiences
- **Start short or long-term counselling** - lots of therapists now offer in-person, phone, and online sessions
- **Access free support services** - you can access some on this page, or go to [www.e-wellbeing.co.uk/services](http://www.e-wellbeing.co.uk/services)

## Where to go for support:

# My Safety Plan

Suicidal thoughts can be scary and overwhelming, and sometimes we might not be able to get immediate support. It can be helpful to have a Safety Plan for when suicidal thoughts come up, including your coping strategies and who you can contact.

## I CAN TALK TO...

• **At home:**

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• **At school/college/uni/work:**

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• **At other places (e.g. my youth club):**

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## PLACES I FEEL SAFE ARE...

(e.g. a specific room at school or college)

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## SERVICES I CAN CONTACT ARE...

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## MY POSITIVE COPING STRATEGIES:

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**My emergency  
contacts are:**



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