



for Scotland's mental health



# SUICIDE PREVENTION

Supporting someone  
with suicidal thoughts

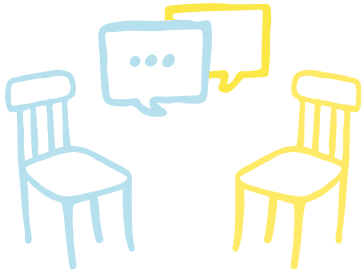


## WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP:

Talking with someone about their thoughts or feelings of suicide **is helpful** and will make it **less likely** they will go on to end their life.\*

The best way to initially help someone who is feeling suicidal is to listen carefully to them and to show them kindness and compassion. You don't have to agree with them but try to understand how they feel. Many people just want to be heard.

Suicide is much more about escaping the feeling of being trapped by mental pain than the actual ending of one's life.



Work with the person to make a **safety plan\*** to use until their mood lifts or the thoughts of suicide pass. This should include:

- **Recognising the warning signs** – e.g. very negative thoughts, sleeping a lot, feeling trapped, hopeless, overwhelmed or numb, risky behaviours or self-neglect.
- **Identify coping strategies** – an activity they enjoy or can distract them e.g. a walk, a bath, video games, going for a drive, sport or exercise, watching TV, music.
- **Identify people or distracting social settings** – list places or people they can meet or get in touch with to provide a distraction. **Avoid bars, pubs, nightclubs, casinos, or gambling shops.**
- **Identify chosen family/friends** – make a list of people they can contact when they are feeling suicidal, people they can trust and feel safe talking to. **Not anyone under the age of 18.**
- **Identify professionals who can help** – e.g. GP surgery, crisis helplines, emergency services, NHS24 ([useful numbers included in this booklet](#))
- **Make the environment safe** – e.g. securely lock medications away, remove or secure lengths of rope, cable, belts, dressing gown cords if necessary from the home and garden, prevent access to firearms.\*

\*R. O'Connor 2021, G Brown & B Stanley 2017

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## WHEN TO GET URGENT HELP:

If you have serious concerns for someone's safety **you must call 999** to alert the most appropriate service for the situation. You won't be in trouble for calling. Here are some key indicators to look for:

- The person cannot keep themselves safe and/or they are putting themselves in harm's way.
- The person is struggling to understand how they will cope or cannot be distracted.
- There is a sudden and dramatic change of mood – either up or down.
- If they disappear or their whereabouts are unknown – **call 999 immediately.**
- The risk of suicide is increased if someone is impulsive particularly if they are **hurt (emotionally), angry, lonely or exhausted.**
- People who live alone or are socially isolated can be more at risk.



## USEFUL CONTACTS AND FURTHER INFORMATION:





Talking therapies have been shown to be very effective in helping people who feel suicidal. More information and help will be available from their GP.

### Emergency Services (Police, Fire, Ambulance)

- 999
- NHS 24 - 111
- Police Scotland non-emergency number – 101

### Samaritans

- jo@samaritans.org
- 116 123 (Freephone)

### SAMH (Scottish Association for Mental Health)

- www.samh.org.uk

### Mind

- www.mind.org.uk
- 0300 123 3393

### Breathing Space

- www.breathingspace.scot
- 0800 838587

### Prevent Suicide – North East Scotland App

- App Store / Google Play

The 'Prevent Suicide' App: Download now on apple, Android, Windows Phone & Kindle Fire devices.



### Living Life

- 0800 328 9655

### Penumbra

- www.penumbra.org.uk

#### Aberdeen:

- aberdeen1stresponse@penumbra.org.uk
- 0800 234 3695
- (Text – 0768647723)

#### Aberdeenshire:

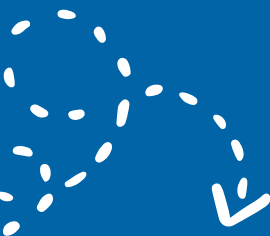
- 0800 135 7950

### Papyrus – Prevention of Young Suicide

- www.papyrus-uk.org
- admin@papyrus-uk.org
- pat@papyrus-uk.org
- 01925 572444
- 0800 068 4141
- (Text – 07786209697)

### Shout

- www.giveusashout.org
- Text SHOUT to 85258



for Scotland's mental health

SAMH is Scotland's mental health charity and is dedicated to mental health and wellbeing for all. We are here to provide help, information and support to people affected by mental health problems.

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