



Suicide Awareness

The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that approximately 1 million people die each year from suicide. To those who are not in the grips of suicidal depression and despair, it's difficult to understand what drives so many individuals to take their own lives. But a suicidal person is in so much pain that he or she can see no other option.

Suicide is a desperate attempt to escape suffering that has become unbearable. Blinded by feelings of self-loathing, hopelessness, and isolation, a suicidal person can't see any way of finding relief except through death. But despite their desire for the pain to stop, most suicidal people are deeply conflicted about ending their own lives. They often wish there was an alternative to suicide, but they just can't see one. There are indications that for each adult who died by suicide there may have been more than 20 others attempting suicide. (WHO)

Terminology

Suicide is the act of intentionally causing one's own death.

Attempted suicide or non-fatal suicidal behaviour is self-injury with at least some desire to end one's life that does not result in death.

Suicidal ideation, also known as suicidal thoughts, is thinking about, considering, or planning suicide. The range of suicidal idea on varies from fleeting thoughts, to extensive thoughts, to detailed planning. Most people who have suicidal thoughts do not go on to make suicide attempts, but suicidal thoughts are considered a risk factor.

Suicide prevention is a collection of efforts to reduce the risk of suicide. These efforts may occur at the individual, relationship, community, and society level.

Every suicide is a tragic event which has a devastating impact, and can be felt across the whole community. Whilst the events and circumstances leading to each suicide will be different, there are a number of areas where action can be taken to help prevent loss of life, so a proper understanding of this topic by practitioners is very important.

Suicide occurs throughout the lifespan and is the second leading cause of death among 15-29 year olds globally. (World Health Organisation)



Suicide Prevention for Children and Young People

Life can be really tough for children these days and sadly some young people may experience suicidal thoughts. However, there are ways in which you can help without being an expert:

Recognise the signs

Although this is not always easy, children/young people may be feeling suicidal if they:
have extreme self-harming thoughts
talk about being a burden
are behaving recklessly talk about their self-harming
withdraw or show loss of interest in school or their favourite activities
change or have loss of appetite; lack of sleep; lack of interest in their appearance.

Hear what they say

It is important to know what children/young people may say in they're feeling suicidal. Examples may include: *"I wish I was dead"* *"People are better off without me"*
"Everything I do is wrong" *"Nothing/no-one can help me now"* *"I can't take it anymore"*

Know how to respond

Remain calm, caring and non-judgemental and reassure them they are not alone. If a suicidal child/young person declares suicidal thoughts, assess the risk and ask:
*"Have you thought about how/when?"**"Have you felt like this before?"**"Who can help?"*

Take action

Create a mini safety plan—try the [Stay Alive app](#)—and remove any potential means to suicide. **IT'S IMPORTANT** to ensure active listening; to give the child/young person your full attention and to keep your focus on them; to have patience - try to ensure they don't feel rushed and to ask open questions. **DON'T**: be afraid of silence; use guilt or threats; minimise or make assumptions, but **DO** keep on listening.

There's no right or wrong way to talk about suicidal feelings – starting a conversation is what's important.

Additional Resources:

[Papyrus](#)

[Suicide Prevention – A help Guide](#)

[Young Minds](#)

[Kirklees - Suicide and Self-harm](#)

"Think Ninja app" to promote wellbeing and help build resilience