

Keeping safe: managing suicidal thoughts



If you are feeling very distressed, or you are having thoughts about harming yourself or taking your own life, it is very important that you ask someone for help.

It may feel like the really distressing feelings will never go away, or you cannot be helped – but you are not alone and not beyond help.

Suicidal thoughts are probably more common than you think. Studies have suggested that up to half of the people in the general population will experience moderate to severe suicidal thoughts for at least two weeks at one point in their lives. The vast majority of these people will never act on these thoughts.

Many people who have had suicidal thoughts say that they were so overwhelmed with negative feelings and thoughts that it was hard to see a solution. However, with support and treatment they were able to allow the negative feelings to pass and they did not act on their thoughts.

It is very important that you do not act on these thoughts or feelings in a way that you may later regret. There are people you can talk to who want to help.

Contents

- | | |
|---|------|
| 1. Talking to someone about how you feel | p. 3 |
| 2. Getting urgent help and support | p. 4 |
| 3. Helping yourself when feeling distressed | p. 6 |
| 4. Other services available | p. 7 |

1. Talking to someone about how you feel

■ Ring a friend

Call someone you feel you can trust and confide in.

■ Contact the Samaritans

They are a trained group of people who you can talk to in complete confidence if you are feeling emotionally distressed or suicidal. They are not only for people who are suicidal, in fact they encourage people to ring before they get to that stage.

You can phone or email them (24 hours a day, every day of the year) or you can talk to them in person at a local branch (opening hours vary across branches).

- **By phone: 116 123** (Samaritans UK helpline)
- **By email:** jo@samaritans.org
- **In person:** visit your local branch. Find your local branch at: www.samaritans.org/branches

Central London branch details:

46 Marshall Street, London W1F 9BF

Nearest tube station: Oxford Circus

t: 020 7734 2800

Open every day, 9am-9pm

■ Make an appointment to visit your GP

2. Getting urgent help and support

If your distress persists and you think you may harm yourself, there are people who want to help.

- **Call 111 to speak to the free NHS helpline for anyone with an urgent healthcare need**

You can call 24 hours a day and can ask for a translator if you need one.

- **Go to your nearest 24-hour emergency department (A&E)**

Here you will be provided with appropriate support and assessment by a dedicated team of trained medical professionals, 24 hours a day.

Our Trust's A&E is based at St Thomas' Hospital, Westminster Bridge Road, London SE1 7EH (near Waterloo).

Your nearest 24-hour A&E is based at:

To be completed by member of staff providing this leaflet

- **Ring or visit your GP**
Make an urgent appointment to see your GP. They can help you find the right support during a time of crisis. If the practice is closed, they may have an out-of-hours contact number, or alternatively go to A&E.
- **Call the crisis support line at the South London and Maudsley NHS Trust**
Call **0800 731 2864** for the 24-hour crisis line, available for patients and carers.
- **Ring a family member or trusted friend**
Call someone who you feel you could confide in and who can support you in getting the help you need.
- **Call your psychology service**
If you are being seen by a psychology service within the hospital, you may have the option to phone the service directly during working hours (9.00am-5.00pm). However, please note that your psychology service may be part-time and is not an emergency or on-call service, so they may not be able to take your call or speak with you immediately.

Your psychology service contact details are:

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| <p><i>To be completed by member of staff providing this leaflet</i></p> |
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3. Helping yourself when feeling distressed

In addition to seeking help, the following points are things for you to consider:

- **Think about the consequences that harming yourself would have on your family and friends.**

- **Think about why your life is worth living.**

- **Imagine that someone you care about was feeling as low as you feel right now, what would you say to them?**

- **Remind yourself that although it may not feel like it, these feelings and thoughts are temporary and will pass with time.**

4. Other services available

There are lots of people and services out there who can help. Here are some contact numbers that may be of use.

CALM: 0800 58 58 58

- CALM (Campaign Against Living Miserably) offers support to men in the UK of any age who are down or in crisis via their helpline, webchat and website: <https://www.thecalmzone.net/>
- Phone lines are open 5pm-midnight, 365 days a year.

Childline: 0800 1111

- This is a free, confidential helpline for children and young people in the UK. Open 24 hours a day, every day of the year. This number will not show up on your phone bill. For more information go to: <https://www.childline.org.uk/>

PAPYRUS: 0800 068 41 41

- This is a voluntary organisation that supports teenagers and young adults who are feeling suicidal. This is **not** a 24-hour service. For more information go to: <https://papyrus-uk.org/>

SANEline: 0300 304 7000

- This is a national, out-of-hours mental health helpline offering specialist emotional support and information to anyone affected by mental illness – including family, friends and carers. It is open 4.30-10.30pm, every day of the year. For more information go to: <http://www.sane.org.uk/>

The Silver Line: 0800 4 70 80 90

- This is a free, confidential helpline providing information, friendship and advice to older people (over 55 years of age). Open 24 hours a day, every day of the year. For more information go to: <https://www.thesilverline.org.uk/>

For further online information about keeping yourself safe – please visit:

<http://www.stayingsafe.net/home>

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