



Are you  
worried about a  
young person?



If you are worried someone is thinking about suicide, don't be afraid to ask them straight out.

Supporting someone who's having suicidal thoughts is both physically and emotionally exhausting.

You need to take care of yourself and know where to go for support and advice, make sure you have someone you trust to talk to openly and honestly.

It is important to take any suicidal thoughts or attempts seriously.

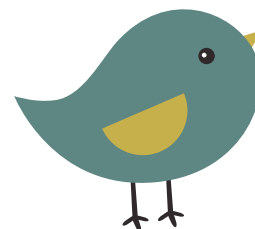
We can all feel helpless sometimes in our lives and there may be many reasons for this. These may be a result of current or past situations but sometimes we have these thoughts and feelings for no reason at all.

Thoughts and feelings are very different! Thoughts do not have to be acted out.

Sometimes young people act on impulse 'the final straw' so spotting the signs early is important. Support can help them see things more clearly and realise there are other options out there. It also allows time for the negative feelings to pass.

*You don't seem  
your usual self...  
can we talk?*

*You've had a lot  
going on recently...  
...how are you feeling?*



## If you are worried about someone, don't ignore it.

Talk to them and do not be afraid to ask them straight out if they are feeling suicidal or wanting to harm themselves. **It won't encourage them to do it.** Often it can start the conversation that they want to have, but didn't know how to start.

If they have previously attempted suicide or self-harmed try to have a balance between being watchful and respecting their privacy but don't ignore what has happened. They are in a lot of pain and struggling to deal with it.

There are specialists available to offer both advice and support and who are willing to listen to both you and the young person you're worried about. See the list on page 13/14 Don't hesitate to contact them.

*You can talk to me about anything, I want to help*



three

## What to look out for Spot the signs

Knowing some of the signs can help identify if someone is having suicidal thoughts.

- Talking about being useless or **'nothing to live for'**
- Saying people would be **better off without them**
- Finding it **hard to cope** with every day things
- Not wanting to talk or be around people
- Using **alcohol or drugs** to cope
- Seem worried, **distant** or agitated
- Changes in their **sleeping habits** (sleeping much more or not at all)
- Visiting people they care about and almost (or actually) saying **'goodbye'**
- Giving things away, especially items that are important to them
- Suddenly **seem calm or happy after they've been really low** or depressed
- Always **writing, drawing or talking about death**
- Searching the internet about **suicide**
- Has a **suicide plan**
- Saying they hear **voices telling them to hurt** themselves (in this case make a GP appointment, take them to A&E or contact emergency services).

four

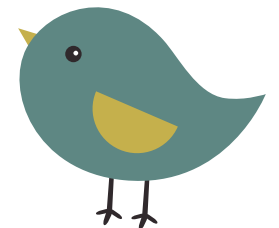
## Who is at risk?

Anyone can feel like this and at any time, but some young people may be at higher risk if they have:

- Attempted **suicide before**
- Had **depression, low mood** or an eating disorder
- Lost a friend or **family member** (especially if to suicide)
- Been a **victim of bullying, violence or sexual abuse**
- Seen **domestic violence** in the home
- No real friendship group
- Pressure or being **embarrassed** on social media
- Issues around **gender or sexual orientation**
- Difficulty **cop**ing with exam stress
- Use **alcohol or drugs** regularly
- Had a **major disappointment** in their life (failed exams, relationship break-up, dropped from the team)
- A serious or physical **illness**

*I'm really sad to hear you're feeling like this, how can I help?*

*If you can't talk to me, who else would you talk to?*



## How to be supportive

### Talk to them

You could try some of these to start the conversation...

- You're looking **troubled**, what's the matter? How is this making you **feel**?
- How **often** have you had these thoughts?
- When do you most think about this? (**day, night**)
- Have you ever felt like or **tried to hurt or kill yourself**? (eg; taking tablets)
- Are you **thinking about hurting** or killing yourself at the moment?
- Do you have a plan? (place, **method**, items to use)
- What has stopped you **giving in** to these thoughts?
- Have you told anyone **how you are feeling**?
- Who can you **talk to** about how you are feeling?
- Who can you **call at any time** (apart from me) if you need to talk?
- Do you have **contact details** of where you can get **support**?
- When things have been **really hard** before what's helped you **get though**?

## Listen! Listen! Listen!

### Do not judge them

Sometimes it's easier to write down or draw how you feel. It can also be a distraction when talking.



**Show you care:** maybe touch their hand, give a hug and believe in their pain. See things from their point of view.



**Keep their hopes up:** Try to make them feel better about themselves; share things you like about them, their qualities, their skills, why they are special and remind them of positive things to look forward to in the near future.



**Reassure them:** 1 in 4 young people experience these thoughts and feelings so they are not alone and encourage them not to be afraid to talk.



**Feelings will pass:** Try to agree to put some time between thoughts and any actions. This will allow the feelings to pass and for things to be clearer so you can both find different solutions.

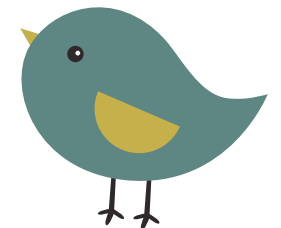
## Be practical

### Ways to stay safe now and in the future

- If not at immediate risk, go to the GP, ring NHS Choices 111 or contact the Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).
- Stay with them and keep them talking.
- Agree with them how they can keep safe such as remove any items that may be used and stay away from unsafe places.
- Agree what can be put in place to help. Identify people they would talk to (a family member, someone in school, college, Uni, at work or a GP). Try some of the coping techniques found on the support websites.
- Encourage them to make a 'box' full of feel good things, music, DVD's, items with happy memories. This can help them get through a difficult day or night.
- Make sure they have details of where they can access support (see list) so they know what do if the strong feelings return, offer to support this initial contact if needed. Alternatively, Samaritans will contact them, if you ask.
- Support them to make a safety plan (but this may not be the best time)

*I am being serious...are you thinking about taking your own life?*

*If I make an appointment with the GP and take you, would you tell them how you are feeling?*



## In an emergency:

If they are at immediate risk, need medical treatment or have a plan and are going to act on it;

- Call your emergency crisis team (CAHMS) or go with them to A&E
- If this is not possible call the emergency services on 999
- Stay with them until support arrives
- Remove any obvious means of suicide (rope, belts, tablets, sharp objects etc)
- Try to stay calm and re-assure them you are staying with them and you care
- Keep them talking
- Keep yourself safe



## Look after yourself

If you're a young person supporting a friend talk to their parent or a trusted adult.  
Do not try to support them by yourself.

- Ensure you have someone you trust who you can talk to
- Take time out for yourself
- Access websites and services that can support you as well

**Samaritans** any time, free from any phone on 116 123 or email: [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org) or Text: 07725 909090. They also have a drop in (see their website).

### Young Minds Parent's Helpline

Tel: 0808 802 5544 (free for mobiles and landlines) open Monday to Friday (offers advice and support to any adult who is concerned about a child/young person's mental health up to the age of 25)

### The Papyrus Hopeline [www.papyrus-uk.org](http://www.papyrus-uk.org)

Offer support if you are worried about someone and need to talk or find how best to support them. Call 080 068 41 41 or text 07786 209 697 or email: [pat@papyrus-uk.org](mailto:pat@papyrus-uk.org)

# Creating a Support Network

Make sure they have details of where to get support

- Details of your GP or NHS direct call free on 111 24 hour helpline providing health advice and access to out of hours GP.
- **Samaritans:** free, any time, from any phone on 116 123 email: [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org) Text: 07725 909090. Samaritans have a drop in at the local Wakefield branch (see their website).
- **Kooth:** [www.kooth.com](http://www.kooth.com)  
Free, safe and anonymous online support for 11 to 19 year olds
- **Childline:** [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk) are online, on the phone anytime on 0800 1111.
- **Papyrus Hopeline:** [www.papyrus-uk.org](http://www.papyrus-uk.org) Call 080 068 41 41 or text 07786 209 697 or email: [pat@papyrus-uk.org](mailto:pat@papyrus-uk.org)  
Offer online text or phone support to young people.
- **YoungMinds:** [www.youngminds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk)  
Their website has resources for children and young people, parents and professionals.
- **CALM:** (Campaign Against Living Miserably) [www.thecalzone.net](http://www.thecalzone.net)  
Offers help via the website and a helpline for men aged 15 - 35
- **Heads Above the Waves:** [www.hatw.co.uk](http://www.hatw.co.uk)  
Online advice, support and coping strategies for young people suffering from depression and self-harm.

- **SelfharmUK:** [www.selfharm.co.uk](http://www.selfharm.co.uk)  
A creative site for young people to communicate with others and express their encouraging experiences through the use of blogs, stories, poetry and art.
- **Elefriends:** [www.elefriends.org.uk](http://www.elefriends.org.uk)  
A safe place to listen, share and be heard.
- **The Mix:** [www.themix.org.uk](http://www.themix.org.uk)  
Young people's guide and support on a range of issues and worries.
- **Change Grow Live:** [www.changegrowlive.org](http://www.changegrowlive.org)  
Call 07917 200969

If you are worried a young person is using drugs or alcohol as a coping strategy Wakefield Young People's Drug & Alcohol Service offers a confidential service.

- **Mindout:** [www.mindout.org.uk](http://www.mindout.org.uk)  
Online instant message service that is confidential and anonymous to support and improve the mental health and wellbeing of LGBTQ communities.
- **Doc Ready:** [www.docready.org](http://www.docready.org)  
Helps to prepare people to talk about mental health to the GP.
- **Well Women Centre** 01924 211114 Face to face counselling and groups for 16 year +
- **Stay Alive App:** An App to download from the Grassroots Suicide Prevention website [www.prevent-suicide.org.uk](http://www.prevent-suicide.org.uk)



This leaflet is based on information adapted from Sheffield Suicide Prevention Strategy 2017 and North Yorkshire Council Suicide - self help guide.