

Suicide Awareness:

How to spot warning signs
and support someone who
may be feeling suicidal

Suicide is the act of intentionally taking your own life.

Suicidal feelings can mean thoughts about ending your life or feeling that people would be better off without you; or it can mean thinking about methods of suicide or making clear plans to take your own life. Anyone can have suicidal feelings, whatever their background or situation.

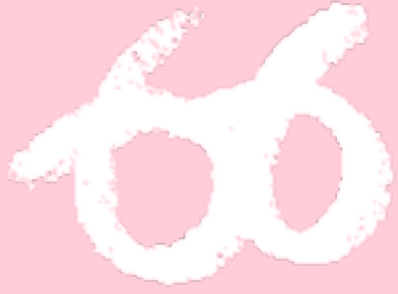
4,912 suicides were registered in the UK during 2020. **Suicide is a big problem.**

Here is a short guide of some the signs to look out for and some tips on how to start an open conversation around suicidal thoughts.

Statistics:

- **1 in 5 people** have suicidal thoughts
- **24.4% of adults in the South West** report having suicidal thoughts at some point in their lifetime – that's the highest of any region in England
- **1 in 15 people** attempt suicide
- **13 people die each day** by suicide in England
- **Women are more likely** to have suicidal thoughts and make suicide attempts than men
- **But men are 3 times more likely** than women to take their own life than women

(Source: Mental health and wellbeing in England: Adult psychiatric morbidity survey 2014)



I couldn't see past the pain. It was a different reality for me. I only knew I wanted the pain to stop, the anguish to go away.



Mental health problems

Bullying or discrimination

Feeling inadequate or a failure

Adjusting to big life changes

Bereavement

Money problems

Long term physical pain or illness

Trauma or abuse

Loneliness

Common causes of suicidal feelings

Struggling to cope with certain life challenges can cause us to feel suicidal.

Warning signs to look out for:

A change in someone's personality or behaviour might be a sign that they are having suicidal thoughts. Signs that something is wrong can sometimes be more difficult to spot, but can be life changing.

Changes can include:

- Being more irritable and confrontational
- Having mood swings
- Acting recklessly or out of character
- Sleeping too much or too little
- Not wanting to be around other people
- Avoiding contact with friends and family
- Having difficulties with work or studies
- Saying negative things about themselves
- Behaving out of character

Behaviours can include:

- Threatening to hurt or kill themselves
- Self destructive and risk-taking acts
- Thanking you or saying sorry to you for no apparent reason
- Putting affairs in order, such as giving away belongings or making a will
- Sudden unexplained 'recovery' from a period of feeling low





If you are worried that there is an immediate risk to someone's life:

- **Stay with them**
- **Encourage the person to talk**
- **Call 999 for emergency help**
- **Trust your gut feeling!**

Supporting someone who is suicidal

- Encourage them to talk about their feelings and **listen!** You don't need to have all the answers – non-judgemental listening **can save lives**
- Don't be afraid to **ask directly** if they are thinking of ending their life – this does not give people ideas they don't already have
- If there is an immediate risk to life, **call the emergency services**
- Stay with them and help create a **safety support plan**
- Encourage them to **seek further treatment and support**
- Help them think of practical ideas for **self-help**
- Remember to **look after yourself** too!

Talking tips:

- **Ask open questions.** These are questions that invite someone to say more than 'yes' or 'no', such as 'How have you been feeling?'
- **Give them time.** You might feel anxious to hear their answers, but it helps if you let them take the time they need.
- **Take them seriously.** People who talk about suicide do sometimes act on their feelings – it's a common myth that they don't.
- **Try not to judge.** You might feel shocked, upset or frightened, but it's important not to blame the person for how they are feeling. They may have taken a big step by telling you.
- **Don't skirt around the topic.** There is still a taboo around talking about suicide, which can make it even harder for people experiencing these feelings to open up and feel understood.



Where to find help:



SAMARITANS

Open 24/7 for crisis support
Call 116 123



shout
85258
here for you 24/7

Open 24/7 for text support
Text 'SHOUT' to 85258



**CAMPAIGN
AGAINST
LIVING
MISERABLY**

Open 5pm until midnight every
day for men's suicide support
Call 0800 58 58 58



FirstResponse
mental health crisis • 24/7

Local 24/7 mental health
crisis first response lines:

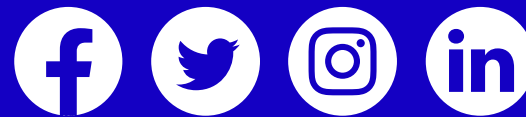
- **Plymouth: call
0800 923 9323**
- **Other Devon: call
0808 196 8708**



www.devonmind.com

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