

WHAT ARE THE IMPACTS OF SUICIDE?

When someone dies by suicide, their family, loved ones, and communities are often forever changed. The long-held conventional wisdom is that suicide only really impacts close family members, and typically after a suicide, only those considered immediate kin are the recipients of sympathies and condolences.

Each suicide leaves behind as many as 130 people who report they directly knew the person. This means that there are probably up to 25 people for each suicide who have a great deal of distress following the suicide and are probably in need of services to get through the intense emotions.

Suicide is preventable.

Most people don't want to die. They don't want to continue living in pain. Multiple stressors and health issues result in feelings of hopelessness and despair

In the absence of hope and support, suicide can seem like the only way out
Talking can offer a sense of relief and reduce the burden of feeling suicidal

WARNING SIGNS

What are the warning signs that someone may be thinking about taking their own life?

- Expressing intent to hurt or kill themselves—always take this seriously.
- Hopelessness – the belief that life won't improve can increase the thoughts that suicide is an option.
- Feeling like a burden—the person can feel that family and/or friends wouldn't be affected or care if they died.
- Previous attempts– are a clear warning sign and are a significant indicator of increased risk.
- Increased drug or alcohol use– this could lead to overdose or increased chance of impulsive acts, behaviour's and decision making.
- Social withdrawal– avoiding others and spending long periods of time alone.
- Researching methods– seeking information about methods or how to access drugs or tools such as blades or weapons.
- Saying goodbye or putting affairs into order– writing letters, wills or making financial arrangements.
- Sudden unexplained recovery– this can be in relation to having made the decision, this can give a person the sense of peace or calm that an end to the distress is in sight.

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Suicide Awareness

EMERGENCY HELPLINES

Call:

Emergency services 999

The Samaritans 116123

Text SHOUT to 85258

For more information and to access resources and homelessness support visit:

www.stonepillow.org.uk

01243 537934

Myth	Reality
Talking about suicide will only encourage it.	When framed in terms of recovery, treatment and hope, discussing suicide is one of the most helpful things you can do
Suicide attempts are about seeking attention	Sometimes attempts can be a signal for help, other times the person is trying to escape attention. Whatever the reason, any suicide attempt should be taken seriously.
Suicide means weakness	Suicide has claimed the lives of many men who have showed bravery throughout their lives.
Suicide is a selfish act and an easy way out.	Sometimes a persons thoughts are so distorted that they think they are actually helping friends and family avoid further suffering.
There is a clear reason for every suicide	Suicide is very complicated and involves many factors. Some of which the person may never have shared or understood themselves

Should I ask?

Suicide is a taboo subject for many. People feeling suicidal often don't want to worry or burden anyone with their feelings and so don't discuss them.

By asking someone directly about suicide, you give them permission to tell you how they feel. People will often say what a huge relief it was to be able to talk about what they were experiencing.

Once someone starts talking they have a better chance of discovering options that aren't suicide. **Evidence shows that asking someone if they're suicidal can protect them.** It shows that somebody cares about them. Reaching out can save a life. If you have concerns, ask someone. This can be difficult, but simple direct questions are necessary.

You could save a life.

Importance of language

Language has the power to influence thoughts and opinions.

Committed suicide - this is a historical term from when suicide was illegal; implying criminality. It's better to say 'death by suicide' or 'died by suicide'.

Failed or successful suicide - no suicide is a success. It's a tragic loss of life.

Talking About Suicide

Talking can offer a sense of relief and reduce the burden of feeling suicidal. When offering support, it's helpful to understand what might encourage or discourage someone from talking. Language is important. However, asking the question is more important than worrying about your approach. Ultimately, the most important thing is your compassion.

Things to say

'I'm pleased you've been able to talk to me about this. Thank you.' You can get through this' - especially if they have in the past.

Express empathy with brief statements *'that sounds awful'/you must feel terrible'*

'What do you normally do when this happens?' - they may have found useful ways of coping previously.

'Is there anything I can do?'

Things to avoid

Asking *'you're not thinking of doing anything stupid?'* - having pain and distress defined as stupid does not open up a conversation.

Shallow and casual reassurances - *'don't worry', 'cheer up', 'things are bound to get better'* etc.

Minimising problems - if their problems feel like a big deal, then treat them as a big deal.

Judgement or moralising about suicide - just listen and accept what's being said.

Using guilt or threats - *'you'll ruin your family's lives', 'it's a coward's way out'* etc.

Calling their bluff - *'go on then just do it'.*

Interrupting to talk about yourself - just listen!