

How to support someone if you think they are suicidal



Suicidal means a person is thinking about killing themselves. If you think someone is feeling suicidal, talk to them about how they feel.



You might feel you need to try to give them answers. But the most important thing you can do is listen.

Try not to judge



You might think that some things they do are making their problems worse. For example, they may be drinking too much alcohol.



But telling them this will not be very helpful to them. Reassure them. Respect and support can help someone during difficult periods.

Warning signs of suicide

Emotional changes



A person may be at serious risk if they talk or write about death, dying or suicide.



A person may also be at risk if they:

- complain of feelings of hopelessness



- have episodes of sudden rage and anger



- talk about feeling trapped. Saying there is no way out of their current situation



- have sudden mood swings



- lose interest in most things

Behavioural changes



A person may be at serious risk if they:

- say they will hurt or kill themselves
- look for ways to kill themselves



A person may also be at risk if they:

- have sudden rage and anger
- act in a dangerous way. Take part in risky activities
- self-harm - including misusing drugs or alcohol. Or using more than they usually do



- becoming withdrawn from friends and family



- appear anxious and agitated



- are unable to sleep or sleep more than usual

- say their life has no purpose



- put their affairs in order, such as giving things away or making a will



If you notice any of these warning signs talk about how they are feeling. Scottish Association for Mental Health (SAMH) have information and advice on [how to ask if you're concerned someone is thinking about suicide](#) (PDF 484KB).



You can also ask for permission to share your concerns with their GP or if they have one, their care team.

Practical advice to support someone



[Scottish Association for Mental Health \(SAMH\)](#) has more information about helping someone.

They have information for:

- [friends and family](#)
- [people supporting an employee](#)
- [people supporting a student](#)

There is also information for [how to cope when supporting someone else](#). It's important that you also look after your own mental health.



[YoungMinds](#) have advice and resources for parents. You can also get help from your GP or by phoning 111.