



## Why do you feel like this?

Lots of young people feel suicidal at some point in their lives. Thousands go into hospital each year having tried to harm themselves. Many more than this try to take their own lives - and nobody ever gets to know about it.

Most of them recover and never try again. A small number, however, do succeed in killing themselves.

This is why feeling suicidal can be dangerous and needs to be talked about.

## Suicidal thoughts can come into your head...

### ...for no reason at all.

This is very frightening and sometimes happens because some of the chemicals in your brain are not working properly. You may have an illness called depression which you will need to talk to your doctor about.

### ...because something has happened to you which has upset you a great deal.

Like for example:

- splitting up with a boyfriend or girlfriend
- being bullied
- feeling ashamed of something you've done
- feeling ashamed of something that was not your fault
- someone close to you has died
- not getting the exam results you wanted
- feeling confused about your sexuality
- feeling you can't live up to other people's expectations
- problems at home

### ...because you have been using drugs or drinking heavily.

### ...when someone close to you has attempted or actually committed suicide.

### ...or because of a combination of any of these things

## What kind of person feels like this?

It can happen to anybody.

It's very hard to generalise about this, but many young people who think about taking their own lives

- are very sensitive to failure or criticism
- set themselves targets which are difficult to achieve
- cannot cope well with disappointment
- find it difficult to admit to having problems and don't know how to solve them
- find it hard to tell others how they are feeling

They often feel worthless, feel hopeless about the future, or believe that no one cares about them, even that the world would be a better place without them.

Friends and family may be seeing someone who on the outside...

- is very angry and hostile
- has become very quiet and withdrawn
- is the life and soul of the party
- seems no different from usual,

... but they have no idea how you are feeling inside.

Many young people don't actually want to die, but are looking for an answer to their problems, an end to their pain and despair - and suicide can seem to be the only way out.

When this state of mind has been reached, it is impossible to think straight (although you will believe that you're thinking clearly) and things can get totally out of proportion.

## How do you know if you've got depression?

Just like physical illness, mental health problems can vary from mild to serious. Most people who suffer a bout of psychological illness will go on to make a complete recovery.

Anxiety and depression are very common and both can be successfully treated. Depression, however, can kill - if suicidal thoughts get the better of you.

**You may be feeling:**

- tired all the time
- sad and miserable
- can' t be bothered to do things
- inadequate
- tearful
- anxious
- panicky
- agitated
- scared people will laugh at you
- that you' re going mad
- like shit!

**Perhaps you've:**

- lost interest in food
- found it difficult to concentrate
- lost your confidence
- lost interest in other things too - hobbies, sport, your appearance
- stopped going out with friends

You must go to see your doctor who will be able to tell you if you are depressed, and will know what to do to help you to get back to normal.

**What happens if you go ahead?**

Sometimes the person who attempts suicide does not die but damages their body so badly that full recovery is impossible.

If you take your own life, there is no turning back, no second chance.

**Death is final.**

It can be extremely traumatic for the person who finds your body. Something they will never forget.

The effect of suicide on family and friends can be overwhelming. Of all the different ways of dying, suicide is the most difficult for those who are left behind to cope with - whether they are parents, children, partners, friends or even acquaintances.

You won't be around to help other people who may be feeling just as bad as you have done.

**You have prevented other people from helping you - for ever.**

## So what can you do about it?

Tell someone you trust how you are feeling.

This could be someone in your family, your doctor, a teacher, the school nurse, college counsellor, or someone from your church .....

If the person you are telling doesn't seem to understand, don't be put off tell someone else.

You could phone a help line.

Check our links pages for their phone number.

If you reach a suicidal crisis where the desire to kill yourself is overwhelming, **you must tell someone.**

Ask them to keep you company until the feelings pass.

Thinking bad thoughts about yourself all the time (especially about killing yourself) makes you feel worse.

You might be thinking that you're a failure or nobody likes you or that nothing will get better. There might be some thoughts that are very private to you.

**Try to recognise when your bad thoughts are likely to come** and prepare for them.

Try to find something that will get rid of them or will make you think about them less often.

You could try being active, being with people or doing something you enjoy (even though you might not feel like it)

**Talk to someone you trust** about your bad thoughts.

Saying them out loud for the first time is scary but then starts to make them feel less frightening.

**Tell yourself about the good things you've done today** instead of the bad things.

Some people find that it helps to imagine having a great time with their favourite band or football team or movie star. Or it could be eating your favourite meal or lying on a beach in the sun.

Just thinking about your bad thoughts a bit less often can be a great achievement. It can help you realise that you are starting to win the battle.

If you find it difficult to talk, write it down and send a letter, an e-mail or a text.

Use the internet wisely by only accessing sites which give positive help and hope for the future.

Don't be afraid of going to see a specialist like a counsellor or psychiatrist. There are some very good 'talking treatments' which work really well, especially if you go in

the early days of feeling unwell. If you are not able to relate to the person you are seeing - **ask to see someone else.**

### **Listen to the advice you are being given and act on it.**

Try to get help with the problems which may be causing your depression.

If you have been given medication (tablets) to help with your suicidal feelings, make sure you understand how long it takes before they start having an effect. If they don't seem to be working, tell your doctor so that he / she can try something else. Don't stop taking them because you feel better or because you are having side effects. Get advice from your doctor first. You can also talk to your pharmacist about your medication.

### **Avoid alcohol and drugs.**

Although at first they give you a lift, they are known to make depressed people feel even worse in the long run. Under their influence you may do things or make decisions you would not normally make. Using alcohol and other drugs can actually make some people suicidal. Even cannabis can have this effect too.

### **Stop any risk taking behaviour**

- where you want the decision as to whether you live or die to be left to chance. Like driving the car in a way that could kill you (or someone else) Don't be pressured into doing risky things by other people.

### **Be very careful of making an impulsive decision to kill yourself**

Don't listen to sad music when you're really down.

Start looking after yourself with regular meals and plenty of exercise. Get out into the daylight and try to stay out of bed until night time. Find something to do which gives some structure to your day.

Make a list, with phone numbers, of people and / or organisations you can turn to for help in a crisis.

### **Don't expect to feel OK all at once.**

**Just knowing that life is slowly getting better means that there is light at the end of the tunnel.**