



Suicidal feelings

How to cope

If you feel like you want to take your own life, reading this factsheet might help to make you feel better. This factsheet has some ideas for things you can do right now to help yourself get through the immediate crisis.

KEY POINTS

- Just try to get through today rather than focusing on the future.
- Talk through your feelings with someone you trust or a helpline.
- Contact a health professional such as your GP or Community Mental Health Team (CMHT).
- Try to do activities you enjoy which take your mind of distressing thoughts.
- If you are in real danger of taking your own life call emergency services on 999 or go to Accident and Emergency (A&E).

This factsheet covers:

1. [How you can help yourself right now](#)
2. [Getting support](#)
3. [Getting professional help](#)
4. [Things you can do to make yourself feel better](#)

1. How you can help yourself right now

Don't make a decision today

You don't need to act on your thoughts right now. The option of taking your own life isn't going to go away. You can make this decision tomorrow, next week or next month if you still want to.

When you are feeling so bad that you want to take your own life, the thought of just getting through the next few days seem unbearable. Try to focus on just getting through today and not the rest of your life. It may feel that the way you usually cope with these feelings is weaker today. You may not feel able to imagine getting through this.

Avoid focusing on your suicidal thoughts

You might feel that it is impossible not to focus on your suicidal thoughts or why you feel that way. However, focusing on these thoughts can make them stronger and harder to resist acting on them.

Avoid alcohol or drugs

Using alcohol or drugs can make your feelings of suicide stronger. Drugs and alcohol can also make you more impulsive where you might act on sudden urges.

Keep yourself safe

Go to a place where you feel safe and where you do not have anything you can use to harm yourself, such as razors or pills. This place might be your bedroom, a mental health or spiritual centre, crisis centre, library or gym. If you have a lot of medication you can ask someone to hold onto it for you until these feelings pass.

Set small goals to focus on

This could be doing laundry, making a meal, tidying or organising something. While these things might feel pointless, they can help you to stop focusing on your suicidal thoughts.

Avoid being alone

Try not to spend too much time alone. Sometimes when you feel very low it is hard to be around other people. However, if you can be around other people they can help to keep you safe even if they don't know how you're feeling.

Avoid triggers

If you are feeling suicidal, try to avoid things which might trigger low mood. Triggers might be listening to certain music, looking at photos, reminiscing or watching sad films.

Talk to other people

Talk to family and friends and be around them. We look at this in more detail below. Do not be afraid to tell people how you feel.

[Top](#)

2. Getting support

Remember that however alone you feel, there are people who are there to listen and who want to help.

Let family or friends know what you are going through. They may be able to offer support and help keep you safe. They may not be able to make you feel better straight away. However, talking things through may help to see your situation in a different light or think of other options.

Call a support line to talk with someone right now. The Samaritans are available to talk 24 hours a day. Calls are charged at a local rate and in an emergency they may be able to call you back. You can call them on 08457 90 90 90 or email them on jo@samaritans.org. There is a full list of support lines at the end of this factsheet or on our website.

If you can't talk to family or friends you may be able to get emotional support from other sources such as:

- a therapist, counsellor, or psychologist
- a teacher, tutor or colleague
- a religious or spiritual leader.

[Top](#)

3. Getting professional help

You might want to get some professional support as soon as possible. If you have a plan to end your life and feel you may act today then get help now. Here are some ways you can get professional help:

- **Your GP**

Your GP might be able to help you get the support you need in a crisis. A GP should be available to speak to you 24 hours a day. Your local surgery should have a number for an out-of-hours GP. You can call your surgery to check what this service is.

- **NHS 111**

If you are not registered with a GP you can call NHS 111. You can call 111 when you need medical help fast but it's not a 999 emergency. This line is open 24 hours a day 7 days a week and

you just need to dial 111. Calls are free from mobiles or landlines.

- **Community Mental Health Team (CMHT)**

If you are under a Community Mental Health Team (CMHT) call your community psychiatric nurse or care coordinator. If they are not there, you could talk to whoever is on duty that day.

- **Crisis services**

If you have access to a mental health crisis line or crisis service (sometimes called a home treatment team), you should call them.

- **Accident and Emergency (A&E)**

Go to the Accident and Emergency (A&E) department of your local hospital. Ask someone to take you if you feel unable to yourself.

- **Emergency services**

If you are having suicidal thoughts and feel like you might take your own life, you can call 999.

- **Crisis houses**

Crisis houses can help you if you are in crisis and act as an alternative to going into hospital. Usually you can only stay in a crisis house from a couple of days up to a month. The NHS, charities and other services run them. They are not available in every area of the country but you can check what there is locally through the local crisis team or doing a search online.

[Top](#)

4. Things you can do to make yourself feel better

When you are feeling very distressed it can help to do things to distract yourself. This can help you stop focusing on your suicidal thoughts. It can be hard to do this, but it is best to try do something you enjoy. Different people enjoy different things.

Relaxation and mindfulness

Try relaxation breathing techniques, listen to a guided meditation podcast, imagery, mindfulness or any other relaxation techniques that work for you.

You can find out more about relaxation and mindfulness in our '**Complementary Therapies**' factsheet which you can download for free at www.rethink.org.

Your senses

Think about how to do things that distract all of your senses (hearing, sight, smell, taste and touch). Here are some suggestions:

- Read a book or magazine, watch a film or TV, go to an art gallery or a walk in a green space, draw or paint.
- Listen to uplifting music, sing, listen to nature, find a free concert or talk in your local area (you can search online).
- Pay attention to nice smells such as coffee shops, your favourite food, a favourite perfume or soap
- Treat yourself to a food you like and pay close attention to how it tastes, how it feels in your mouth and what about it you like. You could bake or cook something.
- Wear something soft or something you feel good in, spend time with your pet if you have one.

Exercise

Exercise releases feel-good hormones and can give you something to focus on. It doesn't need to be anything heavy - a walk or bike ride is good.

Making a list

Make a list of all the positive things about yourself and your life. It might be hard to think of these things right now, but try. Think about your strengths and positive things other people have said about you. At the end of every day write down one thing you felt good about, something you did, or something someone else did for you.

Make a list of things you have done before when you were in a crisis which have helped. Go through this list and do those things again.

Crisis Plans

Make your own crisis plan. Even if you don't feel up to it you can start to think of some things which you find helpful. Keep this plan safe and add to it as you need to. Always know you have it there if you need it.

At the end of this factsheet there is a space where you can write things down that may help you. There is also a sample of a crisis plan you can fill in.



PAPYRUS

This is national charity which is dedicated to the prevention of young suicide.

Tel: 0800 068 41 41

Address: 67 Bewsey Street, Warrington, Cheshire WA2 7JQ

Email: pat@papyrus-uk.org

Website: www.papyrus-uk.org

C.A.L.M. (Campaign Against Living Miserably)

C.A.L.M. provides information and emotional support via a helpline and website aimed specifically at dealing with suicide and emotional distress in young men (up to age 35).

Tel (London): 0808 802 5858 5pm – midnight Sat – Tues

Tel (outside London): 0800 58 58 58

Text: 07537 404717

Address: CALM, PO Box 68766, London SE1P 4JZ

Website: www.thecalmzone.net

Samaritans

A national charity that give confidential emotional support for people who are experiencing feelings of distress, despair or suicidal thoughts.

Tel: 08457 90 90 90

Address: Chris, P.O. Box 9090, Stirling, FK8 2SA

Email: jo@samaritans.org

Website: www.samaritans.org

Sane

Sane is a national charity which aims to improve the quality of life for people affected by mental illness. They run a national, out-of-hours helpline offering specialist emotional support and information to anyone affected by mental illness

Tel: 0845 767 8000 (6pm to 11pm)

Email: Via website www.sane.org.uk/what_we_do/support/email

Website: www.sane.org.uk

Childline

Childline gives advice and support for children and young people coping with distress.

Tel: 0800 11 11 open 24 hours (freephone)

Website: www.childline.org.uk/Pages/Home.aspx

Youth 2 Youth

This is a confidential helpline run by young people for young people.

Tel: 02088963675 (Monday and Wednesday 6.30pm – 9.30pm)

Webchat: on their website

Website: www.live-lifewell.net/youth-2-youth-helpline

Get Connected

Free, confidential telephone and email helpline finding young people the best help whatever the problem. Gives free connections to local or national services, and can text information to callers' mobile phones.

Tel: 0808 808 4994 (7 days a week 1pm-11pm)

Website: www.getconnected.org.uk

Lesbian and Gay Switchboard

The LGBT Switchboard has a practical and emotional helpline for lesbian, gay, bisexual or transexual communities.

Tel: 0300 330 0630

Website: www.llgs.org.uk/contactus.html

The Maytree Respite Centre.

The Maytree is a sanctuary of the suicidal offering somewhere to stay for a few nights and someone to talk to. It offers a non-medical environment and has trained volunteers engaging in befriending as well as time for rest and relaxation. You can self-refer or be referred by a health professional.

Tel: 020 7263 7070

Address: 72 Moray Road, Finsbury Park, London, N4 3LG

Email: maytree@maytree.org.uk

Website: www.maytree.org.uk

[Top](#)



1. Three people you can call if you are feeling suicidal

Name	Telephone number

2. Ten things you could do to help yourself

	e.g. Call the Samaritans
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	
9	
10	

Safety Plan

<p>Who can I call:</p> <p>Friend</p> <p>Professional</p> <p>Helpline</p>	<p>What would I say to someone else in my situation?</p>	<p>Who can help me and how?</p>
<p>Where can I go that I feel safe?</p>	<p>What have I done before that's worked?</p>	<p>If the suicidal feelings won't go away what should I do?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Go to A&E• Call 999
<p>What can I do to distract myself?</p>	<p>What things make me feel worse that I should avoid?</p>	<p>Any other helpful thoughts, ideas</p>

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This factsheet is available
in large print.



Rethink Mental Illness

Phone 0300 5000 927

Monday to Friday, 10am to 2pm

Email advice@rethink.org

Did this help?

We'd love to know if this information helped you.

Drop us a line at: feedback@rethink.org

or write to us at Rethink Mental Illness:

Feedback
PO Box 68795
London SE1 4PN

or call us on 0300 5000 927.

We're open 9am to 5.30pm, Monday to Friday.



Leading the way to a better
quality of life for everyone
affected by severe mental illness.

For further information
on Rethink Mental Illness
Phone 0300 5000 927
Email info@rethink.org

www.rethink.org

Need more help?

Go to www.rethink.org for information on symptoms, treatments, money and benefits and your rights. Or talk to others about your problem at www.rethink.org/talk.

Don't have access to the web?

Call us on 0300 5000 927. We are open 9am to 5.30pm, Monday to Friday and we will send you the information you need in the post.

Need to talk to an adviser?

If you need practical advice, call us between 10am and 2pm, Monday to Friday. Our specialist advisers can help you with queries like how to apply for benefits, get access to care or make a complaint.

Can you help us to keep going?

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