

How can you help people with suicidal thoughts?

There are three steps you can take to help someone with suicidal thoughts:

A = Attend to your own feelings and compose yourself. You need to make sure you are in a calm frame of mind to start supporting them.

I = Inform the person you are worried about them. Allow them time to talk about their feelings and what they want to happen and never judge them. Listen to what they tell you and never blame them for their feelings.

D = Discuss the need for professional help and agree on actions together. In a school environment this might include attending the school counsellor's office or making an appointment with the GP. If you are worried the person is in crisis, immediately contact 999, who will be able to arrange immediate support and enable the person to stay safe.

In some areas of the country there are crisis helplines for anyone worried about or experiencing a mental crisis.

If an adult with support needs is experiencing suicidal ideation, report to the local adult social services. Follow your organisation's safeguarding procedure, which usually involves reporting to the manager for them to then take appropriate actions to safeguard the individual.

Concerns about children

If you are concerned about a child's mental wellbeing, get advice and support from:

- **The NSPCC Helpline** – 0808 800 5000.
- **Childline** – 0800 1111. Children may feel more able to talk with counsellors through Childline.

If the child is in school, speak to them and their parent(s) to identify appropriate support. Within a school environment, this might involve the school's counselling service and the child's parent(s) could be encouraged to make an appointment with the child's GP to enable a referral on to specialist mental health services.

If you think the child is experiencing abuse or is at high risk of attempting suicide, follow your organisation's safeguarding procedure and report to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or local children's social services.

Crisis

Someone who is experiencing suicidal ideation might be in crisis. This means they might no longer be in control of their feelings or the actions they feel they might take.

Anyone can experience suicidal ideation at any point and may reach a crisis point. When this happens, there is usually a crisis helpline number the person or someone who is concerned about them can call for immediate help and advice.

Someone with urgent care needs can also:

- Book an emergency GP appointment.
- Contact the Samaritans.
- Visit A&E.
- Call 999.

There are a wide range of organisations that people who experience suicidal ideation can contact and get support from.

Mind – mental health charity.

Samaritans – for people considering or at risk of taking their own lives. Tel: 116 123

National Self Harm Network

Papyrus – information and support for children and anyone worried about a young person.

CALM – male-specific suicide prevention organisation.

Youngminds – charity aiming to support young people with access for mental health support.