

What is suicide prevention?

Suicide is a major public health issue that affects individuals, families and communities. This page is to help people understand suicide, recognise warning signs, find support and know how to help themselves or others.

By increasing awareness, reducing stigma, recognising warning signs and ensuring people can access timely support, we can save lives. Whether you are looking for information for yourself, are concerned about someone else, or want to learn more about suicide prevention this page provides practical guidance, trusted resources and information on where to find help.

What is suicide and why does it happen?

Suicide is complex and can affect anyone. There is rarely one single cause. People may feel overwhelmed by things like mental health difficulties, life events, loss, financial worries, or relationship problems.

Sometimes people feel:

- hopeless or like things won't get better
- alone or disconnected from others
- like a burden to others
- unable to cope or see a way forward

If you are feeling this way, you are not alone. Help is available, and talking to someone can make a difference.

What are the warning signs?

Someone may not always say they are struggling, but there are signs to look out for.

Trust your instincts — if something doesn't feel right, it's okay to check in.

Changes in how someone feels or talks:

- Talking about feeling hopeless, trapped or like a burden
- Thoughts that life is not worth living
- Feeling overwhelmed by stress, grief or difficult life events
- Saying goodbye or giving things away
- Talking about death or suicide

Changes in behaviour:

- Withdrawing from family, friends or activities
- Taking risks or acting differently than usual
- Significant changes in sleep or appetite
- Increased use of alcohol or drugs

Changes in mood:

- Low mood or anxiety
- Sudden calmness after distress
- Irritability or anger

What should I do if I'm worried about someone?

If you are concerned about someone:

- Ask them directly how they are feeling
- Listen without judging
- Encourage them to seek help
- Stay with them if you think they are at immediate risk
- Seek support yourself if needed

You do not need to have all the answers. Being there and listening can help someone feel less alone.

What can I do if I'm struggling?

If you are finding things difficult:

- Talk to someone you trust – a friend, family member or colleague
- Contact a support service – there are people ready to listen
- Make an appointment with your GP

- Try small steps like getting outside, keeping a routine, or writing down how you feel

If things feel overwhelming, focus on getting through one moment at a time. You do not need to be in crisis to ask for help.

What should I do in a crisis?

If you or someone else is in immediate danger:

- Call 999 or go to the Emergency Department
- Contact Lifeline on 0808 808 8000 (24/7, free)
- Tell someone you trust
- Stay with the person until help is available

Help is always available — you don't have to face this alone.

How can we prevent suicide?

Suicide prevention is everyone's responsibility. Small actions can make a big difference.

- Talk openly about mental health
- Challenge stigma and encourage help-seeking
- Look out for others in your community
- Share information about support services
- Create safe, supportive environments at home, work and school

By working together, we can help save lives.

Looking after your mental wellbeing

Looking after your mental wellbeing is just as important as looking after your physical health. Helpful steps may include:

- Talking openly with someone you trust.
- Maintaining regular sleep, exercise and healthy eating habits
- Staying connected with family and friends
- Taking breaks from stressful situations where possible

- Seeking professional support early if you're struggling.

Last reviewed
05 October 2026

Related content

- [Lifeline](#)
- [HSC Apps Library](#)
- [The Self-Harm Registry](#)