

# Suicide Awareness – help is available and myths about suicide

If you're dealing with suicidal thoughts or thinking about self-harm, it's important to know that you're not alone. Help is available when you're feeling low – you don't have to hurt yourself or suffer in silence. If you're in crisis or struggling to cope, reach out to one of the services below.

Are you experiencing thoughts like this?

"I can't cope."

"Am I suicidal?"

"I can't do this anymore."

"I want to die."

**Sources of help are available, many 24/7 - Services are available on the phone and through text or webchat – so you don't have to talk if you don't want to.**

## NHS

In an emergency, dial 999.

The 111 service provides urgent mental health assessment and support 24/7.

**Phone:** 111

## Breathing Space

<https://breathingspace.scot/>

**Phone:** 0800 83 85 87

## Samaritans

A helpline for anyone feeling low or considering suicide.

<https://www.samaritans.org/scotland/samaritans-in-scotland/about-samaritans-scotland/>

**Phone:** 116 123

## Childline

A service for young people under 19 struggling with mental health issues, or any other problem.

**Phone:** 0800 1111

**Webchat:** <https://www.childline.org.uk/get-support/1-2-1-counsellor-chat/>

## YoungMinds Crisis Messenger

A 24/7 text messaging service for young people in crisis.

**Text:** Text YM to 85258

## SAMH

Source of advice and help.

<https://www.samh.org.uk/about-mental-health/suicide/suicide-prevention>

## Why is it important?

In 2018, in the UK and Republic of Ireland, more than 6,800 people died of suicide. **Two people die by suicide every day in Scotland.** Every life lost to suicide is a tragedy. And we know that suicide is preventable, it's not inevitable. If you are feeling suicidal, or you are concerned about someone, it is important to talk and to listen. Talking about suicide is highly stigmatised. But if you can succeed in talking to someone you know about their unhappiness and distress, you could literally save a life. Emotional support can help reduce the risk of people taking their own lives and give them the opportunity to find a solution other than suicide.

## **Myths about Suicide (Samaritans):**

**Myth:** Talking about suicide is a bad idea as it may give someone the idea to try it.

**Fact:** Suicide can be a taboo topic. Often, people who are feeling suicidal don't want to worry or burden anyone with how they feel and so they don't discuss it.

But, by asking someone directly about suicide, you give them permission to tell you how they feel. People who have felt suicidal will often say what a huge relief it was to be able to talk about what they were experiencing.

Once someone starts talking they've got a better chance of discovering options that aren't suicide. Evidence shows asking someone if they're suicidal can protect them. They feel listened to, and hopefully less trapped. Their feelings are validated, and they know that somebody cares about them. Reaching out can save a life.

Rory O'Connor, Professor of Health Psychology at Glasgow University

**Myth:** People who say they are going to take their own life are just attention seeking and shouldn't be taken seriously.

**Fact:** People who say they want to end their lives should always be taken seriously.

It may well be that they want attention in the sense of calling out for help, and helping them get support may save their life.

**Myth:** People who talk about suicide aren't serious and won't go through with it.

**Fact:** People who kill themselves have often told someone that they do not feel life is worth living or that they have no future. Some may have actually said they want to die.

It's possible that someone might talk about suicide as a way of getting attention, in the sense of calling out for help.

It's important to always take someone seriously if they talk about feeling suicidal. Helping them get the support they need could save their life.

The majority of people who feel suicidal do not actually want to die - they do not want to live the life they have.

**Myth:** If a person is serious about killing themselves then there's nothing you can do.

**Fact:** Often, feeling actively suicidal is temporary, even if someone has been feeling low, anxious or struggling to cope for a long period of time. This is why getting the right kind of support at the right time is so important.

**Myth:** People who are suicidal want to die.

**Fact:** The majority of people who feel suicidal do not actually want to die; they do not want to live the life they have. The distinction may seem small but is very important. It's why talking through other options at the right time is so vital.

**Myth:** Most suicides happen in the winter months.

**Fact:** Suicide is complex, and it's not just related to the seasons and the climate being hotter or colder, and having more or less light. In general, suicide is more common in the spring, and there's a noticeable peak in risk on New Year's Day.