

Concerned About Suicide

Warning Signs • Risk Factors



How to Respond

Key Facts about
Suicide & Self-harm

Contacts

What Are The Warning Signs?

Most people who feel suicidal don't really want to die, they just want an end to their pain. These are some of the signs which may indicate that someone is thinking of taking their life:

- A suicide attempt or act of self-harm
- Expressing suicidal thoughts
- Preoccupation with death
- Depression
- Becoming isolated
- Alcohol abuse
- Drug abuse
- Sudden changes in mood or behaviour
- Making 'final' arrangements, e.g. giving away possessions (such as books, CDs, DVDs)

Note: Some of these warning signs and risk factors can be associated with everyday behaviour. You should look at the overall picture for the person you are concerned about. However, the more warning signs and risk factors, the higher the possible risk.

Associated Risk Factors

- Access to a method of suicide, e.g. medication, firearms
- Loss of someone close (such as a friend or family member)
- Relationship break-up
- Impulsiveness, recklessness and risk-taking behaviour
- Alcohol / drug abuse

Suicide on the Island of Ireland - Key Facts

- All groups in Irish society experience loss through suicide
- The suicide rate on the Island of Ireland was traditionally low but is now around the European average
- More men take their own lives than women by as many as 4 male suicide deaths to 1 female suicide death
- Suicide is a leading cause of death in young people
- There is no single cause for suicide
- Anyone of us could potentially become suicidal

Self-Harm and Attempted Suicide

Many people carry out what are called acts of deliberate self-harm. Some, but not all, of these acts can be thought of as a suicide attempt.

- All acts of self-harm should be taken seriously
- Self-harm is a communication of intense distress
- Both males and females self-harm
- It is a particular problem for young people
- Many people who self-harm are under the influence of alcohol

"If you are concerned about someone...

*show you care,
ask the question,
call for help."*

How To Respond

If you are concerned about someone you can follow these three steps:

Show You Care

Offer support and let them know you care.
Say something like:

- 'I'm worried about you and I want to help'
- 'What's up? I'm very worried about you'
- 'Whatever's bothering you we will get through this together'

Ask The Question

Don't be afraid to discuss suicide – asking about it won't put the idea in people's heads:

- 'Do you feel like harming yourself?'
- 'Do you feel like ending your life?'
- 'Are you so down that you just want to end it all?'

Call For Help

Encourage them to look for help:

- 'Let's talk to someone who can help'
- 'I will stay with you until you get help'
- 'You're not alone and there are people who can help you out of this situation'

If you, or someone you know, is in crisis now and need someone to talk to:

- Contact Samaritans on 1850 609090 (Republic of Ireland) or 08457 909090 (UK including Northern Ireland)
- Contact your local doctor or GP out-of-hours service, see 'Doctors - General Practitioners' in the Golden Pages, Republic of Ireland / 'Doctors (Medical Practitioners)' in the Yellow Pages, Northern Ireland
- Go to, or contact, the Accident and Emergency Department of your nearest general hospital

For details of local health services you can contact:

Republic of Ireland - the Health Service Executive between 8am and 8pm, Monday to Saturday on CallSave **1850 24 1850** or visit www.hse.ie

Northern Ireland – visit the 'Minding your head' website at www.mindingyourhead.info

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www.nosp.ie

www.dhsspsni.gov.uk