

# CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE HELP FOR SUICIDAL THOUGHTS

If you're feeling like you want to die, it's important to tell someone. Help and support is available right now if you need it. You do not have to struggle with difficult feelings alone.

## **Talk to someone you trust**

Let family or friends know what's going on for you. They may be able to offer support and help keep you safe.

There's no right or wrong way to talk about suicidal feelings – starting the conversation is what's important.

## **Who else you can talk to?**

If you find it difficult to talk to someone you know, you could:

- call a GP – ask for an emergency appointment
- call 111 out of hours – they will help you find the support and help you need
- contact your mental health crisis team – if you have one

### **Getting help in an emergency**

**If you have seriously harmed yourself – for example, by taking a drug overdose, seek immediate help.**

**Go to any hospital A&E department (sometimes known as the emergency department)**

**Call 999 and ask for an ambulance if you can't get to A&E**

**Or ask someone else to call 999 or take you to A&E**

# HOW CAN I HELP MYSELF RIGHT NOW?

## ● Don't make a decision today

Decide not to do anything right now to hurt yourself. You do not have to act on your thoughts of suicide right now. Try to focus on just getting through today and not the rest of your life. You may have had these thoughts before, but you feel less able to cope today. You might find that you are more able to cope in a few days.

## ● Look at your crisis plan

Follow your crisis plan if you have one. If you don't have a crisis plan you could make one. A crisis plan is sometimes called a safety plan. Ideally a crisis plan should be made before someone is in crisis, but it is never too late to start. The aim of a crisis plan is to think about what support you need when you are in crisis.

This may include:

- not being alone,
- removing certain objects from the home,
- talking to a certain person or helpline,
- talking to a professional, distraction techniques, and including reasons to live, such as pictures of family.

Distraction techniques can include:

- Read a book or magazine
- Watch a film or TV
- Go to a museum
- Walk in a green space like a park
- Draw or paint
- Listen to music
- Sing
- Listen to nature
- Spend time with a pet

**Remember  
to write down the  
names and numbers of  
people who would be  
able to help you. Keep  
this plan safe and  
change it as you  
need to.**

## Look in your crisis box

If you don't have a crisis box, you can make one. A crisis box has lots of different names such as a 'happy box' or 'hope box.' You can call it whatever you like. The idea of a crisis box is that it is filled with items that make you feel better.

You can use it when you feel anxious, stressed or suicidal. The crisis box is personal to you. You can fill it with anything, such as:

- your favourite music/songs,
- something to distract you, like a puzzle or colouring book,
- reminders of positive things you have learnt in therapy sessions,
- a copy of your crisis plan,
- photographs of people you love and who make you happy, or
- your favourite sweets.

If you don't know what to put in your box, you can look online for ideas

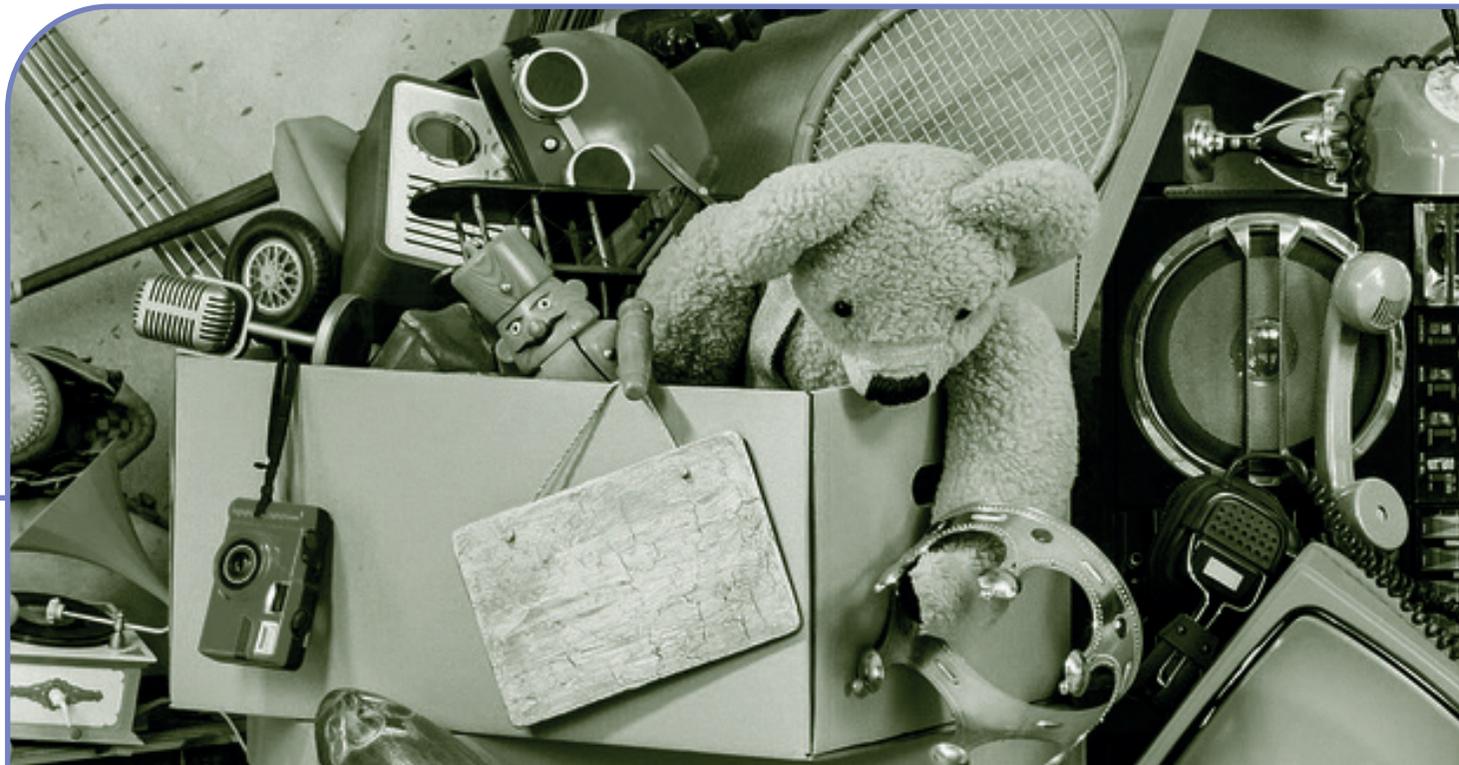
**A crisis box is personal to you and should be filled with items that make you feel happier about life.**

## Be aware of your triggers

Triggers are things which might make you feel worse. Triggers are different for different people. You may find that certain music, photos or films make you feel worse. Try to stay away from these.

You could create a Wellness Action Plan to help you to be more self-aware. It can help you to identify triggers in your life which can make you unwell. It may help you to write down your triggers. If you can understand what your triggers are, it can help you to be more in control of your feelings or stress levels.

You can share your Wellness Action Plan with your family or friends if you want to. Sometimes it is helpful to share with your family and friends because it can help them to understand you more.





You can find details or emotional support lines and apps in the 'Useful Contacts' section.

## Stay away from drugs and alcohol

Alcohol affects the parts of your brain that controls judgement, concentration, behaviour and emotions. Drinking alcohol might make you more likely to act on suicidal thoughts. Drugs affect the way you think and feel.

Different drugs have different effects. For example, some drugs can make you feel happy and more likely to take risks when you take it.

But you may feel depressed after the effects stop. Other drugs can cause hallucinations, confusion and paranoia. You may be more likely to take your own life if you take illegal drugs.

## Go to a safe place

Go to a place where you feel safe. Below is a list of places you could try.

- Your bedroom
- Mental health centre / crisis centre
- Friend's house
- Library

Stay away from things you could use to harm yourself, such as razor blades or pills. If you have a lot of medication you can ask someone to keep it for you until you are back in control of your feelings.

## Talk to other people

It could be helpful for you to talk to someone about how you're feeling. There are different people who can help. You could speak to friends, family or your GP.

Remember to be patient. Your friends and family may want to help but might not know how to straight away. If this happens, you should tell them what you want from them. You may want to talk about how you're feeling, or you may want them to help you get professional help. If you don't want to talk to people you know, you could call an emotional support line, use an emotional support app or use an online support group.

## Be around other people

You may find it too difficult to speak to anyone at the moment. That's ok. But try not to spend too much time alone. You could go to a shopping Centre, gym, coffee shop or park. Being around people can help to keep you safe, even if they don't know how you're feeling.

## Distract yourself

You might feel it is impossible not to focus on your suicidal thoughts or why you feel that way. If you focus on your thoughts it might make them feel stronger and harder to cope with. Try doing things that distract you. Think about what you enjoy doing.

Below are some things you could do as a distraction:

- Read a book or magazine.
- Watch a film or TV.
- Go to a museum.
- Draw or paint.
- Listen to music.
- Play video games. Or other games or puzzles you enjoy.
- Singing
- Spend time with your pet.
- Set small goals to focus on.

## Make 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 did for you.

## Exercise

Exercise can have a good effect on your mood and thinking. Exercise is thought to release dopamine and serotonin. These are 'feel good' hormones.

## Relax

There are different things you could do to relax such as: walk in a green space like a park, listen to nature, 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 you like about it, having a bath or shower, looking at images that you like, such as photographs, meditation or mindfulness, breathing techniques or guided meditation.



You can find these through a podcast or an online video website such as YouTube.

## Try Mindfulness

Mindfulness is a type of meditation. It is when you focus on your mind and body. It is a way of paying attention to the present moment. When you practice mindfulness, you learn to be more aware of your thoughts and feelings. Once you are more aware of your thoughts and feelings, you can learn to deal with them better. But some people find that using meditation or mindfulness makes their suicidal thoughts worse. If this happens then stop. You can try a breathing exercise to relax, like the one below.

## A breathing exercise for you to try

Sit on a chair or on the floor. Keep your back straight and your shoulders back. Close your eyes and focus on your breathing. Think about how your breathing feels. Slow down your breathing as much as you can. You may find it useful to count as you inhale and exhale. If you start to have upsetting thoughts, bring your focus back to your breathing. Think about the people you will be leaving behind. You may be thinking thoughts such as the following:

- 'The world would be a better place without me.'
- 'My family would be better without me.'
- 'No one would care if I'm not here.'

These thoughts are common, but not correct. **You matter.**

Choosing to end your life is likely to have a negative effect on those around you. Even if you don't think it will. This will include friends, family, neighbours or a healthcare professional such as a doctor or support worker

## Where can I find further help and support from?

Remember that however you feel there are people who will 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. But tell them how you feel. They may help you see your situation in a different way or think of other options. If you can't talk to family or friends, you may be able to get emotional support from other places. You could talk to:

- **NHS Mental Health Crisis Line:** Telephone: 0300 456 83 42
- **Mindsight Surrey CAMHS:** <https://www.sabp.nhs.uk/mindsightsurreycamhs/about-us/parents-carers>
- **Access CAMHS Single Point of Access** Telephone: 0300 222 5755 for help

- **GP:** Call your GP if you know who they are. A GP may be able to offer support in a crisis. If the GP surgery is closed there will be a recorded message to tell you who to call.
- **NHS 111:** NHS 111 can help if you have an urgent medical problem and you're not sure what to do. Dial 111 on your phone. It is a free service. They are open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

### ThinkNinja app:

App designed for children and young people (10-18 years old) to help educate about mental health and emotional wellbeing. It helps children and young people learn and develop a range of skills for when they are experiencing daily life stresses or who maybe feeling anxious or their mood feeling low. Download to smartphone or tablet via Google play or Apple app store.

### Stay Alive suicide prevention app:

Offers help and support both to people with thoughts of suicide and to people concerned about someone else. The app can be personalised to tailor it to the user. Download to smartphone or tablet via Google play or Apple app store.