

Safety Plans

Thoughts of suicide will pass. But being prepared to manage them – and holding off making the decision to die for just a minute – can make all the difference. You can learn to live with thoughts of suicide. A Safety Plan is a way of working out what might be helpful in keeping yourself safe, and who might support you, when you are having overwhelming thoughts of wishing you were dead.

You can find out more about making a Safety Plan at www.every-life-matters.org.uk/safety-planning/ but you can make a start here. You might want to ask someone close to you, or a professional involved in your care, to help you write your Safety Plan. It's an opportunity to talk together about what to include, what has or hasn't helped before, how the plan will be stored and who it is shared with. You can also take practical steps like storing crucial numbers in your phone, or looking at what other support is out there.

**Every
life
matters** ...

Suicide Safer Cumbria
every-life-matters.org.uk
Charity No.1180815



www.stopsuicidenenc.org

Reasons for Living

Having a scrapbook, a box of items or selection of photos on your phone, of reasons to live can help you hold on when the going gets tough. List three of your Reasons for Living here.

Lifting your Mood

This might be exercise or sport, seeing a friend, doing something creative, listening to your favourite music or watching a box set. What three things can you do to lift your mood and become calmer?

Talking to Someone

List up to three friends, family or helplines who you can reach out to talk to about your thoughts of suicide, or places you can go where you feel safe and looked after.

Distracting Yourself

When the thoughts of suicide become intense what distractions can you use to get you through the next few minutes?

Getting Professional Support

Who will you contact/What you will do when you no longer feel you can keep yourself safe? This might be a mental health professional, key worker or a Universal crisis number.

Distractions

When the feelings are most intense focus on just getting through one minute at a time. Having ways to distract ourselves can make all the difference. Studies suggest that thoughts of suicide are strongest for 15-30 minutes. Try to press the pause button and stay safe for now.

Distractions may be physical, comforting, zoning out, creative, constructive. Examples might include;

- A breathing exercise, your favourite playlist, wrap a blanket around yourself, playing a game on your mobile.
- Hit cushions or a punch bag, shout and dance, bite on bunched up material, tear something up into hundreds of pieces
- Write lists; read a letter to yourself you have written when you are feeling hopeful, look at photos of family and friends
- Flick elastic bands on your wrists, hold ice cubes, smell something with strong odour, have a very cold shower

Visit www.every-life-matters.org.uk/safety-planning/ for more ideas about distraction techniques

What to do in an emergency?

If you have already attempted suicide, seriously harmed yourself or feel unable to keep safe **Call 999**. The call is free. Explain what is happening. You can stay on the phone until the ambulance arrives.

If it's not an emergency but your thoughts of suicide are becoming really difficult to manage then;

- Call the 24hr Universal Mental Health Crisis Lines – North Cumbria **0800 652 2865** – South Cumbria **0800 953 0110** – Newcastle or Gateshead **0800 652 2863** – North Tyneside or Northumberland **0800 652 2861** – South Tyneside or Sunderland **0800 652 2867**
- Or Call **NHS Direct on 111**, they can advise you on how best to get help or how to access out of hours' GP appointments.

It may also be helpful to remove things from your house that you could use to harm yourself, and avoid alcohol and drugs.

**Thinking
about
suicide?**

**How to hold on to
hope and stay safe**





Thoughts of suicide can happen to anyone

These thoughts will pass and you learn how to live with them.

When life gets out of control it's not unusual to feel so overwhelmed that it leads to thoughts of suicide. It may have been a situation that has been building up over time or a recent challenging events such as a bereavement, relationship breakdown, redundancy or money problems.

Many, many people think about suicide at some point in their lifetime, around one in five of us. And the overwhelming majority of people who have thoughts of suicide do not go on to kill themselves.

Having thoughts of suicide can feel distressing and frightening, but just because you are thinking about suicide it doesn't mean its inevitable you will act on these thoughts. There is hope, and you are not alone.



Press the pause button

Is now the right time to make a big decision?

If you're really struggling, and you're not sure if you want to live or die, hold on and try and stay safe for now. Press the pause button. The feelings will pass and there will be things that you - and other people - can do to make your situation better.

You may have reasons for dying - but you also have reasons for living.



Where can I get help?

It's OK to ask for help when you need it.

There are many people and organisations that really want to support you through this difficult time and help you to resolve whatever it is that has led you to the point of thinking about suicide.

- Friends and Family**
 They can offer emotional and practical support and space to talk. Build a circle of support around yourself. You may worry about people's reactions but those around you do care.
- Visit your GP**
 They can refer you to a range of mental health services including NHS Talking Treatments and Crisis support, as well as prescribing Medication. Ask someone to attend the appointment with you. Plan what you want to say and be specific and open about your thoughts of suicide.
- Telephone and Text Helplines**
 Speaking to someone who is trained to listen can help you find perspective. Put the numbers in your phone so you have them when you really need them.
- Professional Help**
 There is a wide range of other help available locally and nationally. Look at the Get Help Section on our website to find out more, including groups that might help you address the issues that have led to thoughts of suicide.
- Peer support**
 From people who have been through similar experiences to you, can be very powerful. There are a growing number of safe online support forums such as Minds Side by Side group and TogetherAll. Look at the Get Help Section on our website to find out more.

Make yourself a Safe Plan now. Visit www.every-life-matters.org/safety-planning for more details



Talk to someone

Choose someone you can share your feelings with, someone you trust. This might be a good friend, a relative, a work mate or a college lecturer. Try and choose someone that you feel could help you and will offer you time and understanding.

If it feels hard to find the words, you might want to speak to someone who is trained to listen, like the Samaritans. You don't have to be suicidal. You can talk to them about whatever's getting to you, in your own way, and off the record.



Look after your wellbeing

There are simple steps you can take to improve your wellbeing, to distract yourself, and to even out your mood.

- Relax**
 Take opportunities to do things you enjoy, or learn relaxation techniques or mindfulness.
- Connect with People**
 Keep in touch with friends and family, and to continue activity where you are in contact with other people.
- Stay active**
 Exercise can help to reduce stress and anxiety, help you sleep better, and boost overall mood.
- Eat well**
 Experts believe that a healthy, balanced diet can have a positive effect on mood.
- Limit alcohol and Avoid Drugs**
 Alcohol and drugs can be a tempting release, but both can act as depressants and increase risk of acting on thoughts of suicide.
- Sleep Well**
 Sleep has a significant impact on how we feel and cope with life's challenges. If sleeping has become a problem, you can try a variety of Apps to help or speak to your GP for help.



Helplines

Put one of these numbers in your phone!

- Samaritans**
 24hr support. Call 116 123
- CALM**
 Helpline for men.
 5pm-midnight
 0800 58 58 58
- Papyrus Hopeline**
 Helpline for young people.
 9am-midnight
 0800 068 4141
- SHOUT**
 24hr Crisis Text Service.
 Text Shout to 85258

Find out more about information, help and support available to you

In Cumbria
www.every-life-matters.org.uk

In the North East
www.stopsuicidenenc.org

