

**Who to call or contact if you are with someone having suicidal thoughts:**

- A trusted **friend, relative, colleague** or **neighbour**
- Contact **Samaritans**: Tel: 116 123 (free-to-call number, 24/7) [www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org)
- Contact the Trust's **employee assistance programme (EAP)** provider: 0800 085 1376 [www.well-online.co.uk](http://www.well-online.co.uk) (username: EEASTlogin password: wellbeing)
- Phone the **EEAST Staff Wellbeing Hub** on 03456 089 945 or email [wellbeing.info@nhs.net](mailto:wellbeing.info@nhs.net)
- Phone the **NHS Helpline on 111**, if they can't wait to see their own GP
- Make an appointment to see their **GP (family doctor)**
- Go to their nearest **Emergency Department (A&E)**
- Contact a **suicide prevention support organisation** in their local area e.g. a member of The Alliance of Suicide Prevention ([www.tasc-uk.org](http://www.tasc-uk.org))
- Contact their **mental health team** or **care co-ordinator** if they have one. Even if they seem really busy they will want to know if the person with you is feeling suicidal, so make sure they are told



If you have been helping someone who has attempted suicide or has taken their own life, please ensure you get appropriate support yourself.

And remember the Staff Wellbeing Hub is here to support you – tel: 03456 089 945 or email: [wellbeing.info@nhs.net](mailto:wellbeing.info@nhs.net)



# Supporting Suicidal Colleagues



## What do you do when you are faced with a friend, a colleague or a member of staff who is telling you they want to take their own life?

Perhaps they have said they would be better off dead, or that the people around them would be better off without them? Perhaps they are threatening to hurt, or kill, themselves?

Or maybe they have not told you, but they may be giving off worrying signals.

### What to look out for:

If someone is acting out of character, and showing any of these signs/behaviours, they could be at risk:

- Appearing anxious or agitated
- Complaining of feelings of hopelessness
- Becoming suddenly angry or raging
- Acting recklessly with little concern about the consequences
- Sleeping more – or less – than usual
- Showing sudden mood swings
- Talking or acting as if their life has no sense of purpose
- Total loss of interest in most things, including the way they look

- Talking about feeling trapped; being stuck, not being able to see a way out
- Self-harming; maybe misusing drugs or alcohol
- Noticeably gaining or losing weight; maybe showing a sudden change in appetite
- Being generally withdrawn
- Sorting out their affairs (changing wills, insurance policies and so on)

### What to do:

**Approach the person:** speak to them, keep them engaged. Maybe take them to a quiet space. Give them your attention

**Ask them outright:** do not be afraid of the questions 'Are you thinking about suicide?', and then 'Have you made a plan?' You will then know what you are dealing with, and what you might be able to do

**Listen to them:** encourage them to keep talking to you. Keep them safe

**Assess their situation.** Think about the options you have, and which might suit the situation you are in (see the list overleaf)

**Support, signpost and encourage** appropriate action

**Never leave them alone** until you know they are safe

At times many people feel like they are not sure if they want to live or die. It is hard to give support, but with support they can choose to live. Most people don't really want to die; they want to get past the excruciating pain they are feeling.

Absolutely anyone might have thoughts of suicide. You might like to know that:

- Suicidal people don't usually want their life to end – they just want their emotional or physical pain to end
- Suicidal thoughts sometimes start because people feel overwhelmed by their problems or their situation. People can find it hard to see a way out
- Suicidal thoughts are far more common than people realise – we just don't talk about them. Thoughts are common, attempts less so, and completed suicides even less
- People can become suicidal if they have really difficult or upsetting things to deal with or if they have lots of smaller worries that combine to make them feel overwhelmed
- Telling someone how you feel can be embarrassing or frightening. But talking to someone is the first step to getting help and staying safe

**If you know someone who struggles with suicidal thoughts – you can help them to make a safety plan to help themselves.**

The idea is that they can use their already thought-through ideas about how to get support and keep safe.

**It's never too late – even if someone is distressed right now, it's still okay to make a safety plan.**

It is more likely to work because they have chosen the kind of support that they might feel comfortable with and have done it when calm.

Things to include:

- People who can help when they're down – who they can talk to at any time of the day or night
- The things that lift their mood and calm them – the things they can do to help themselves
- Things that can distract to help them take small steps through moment to moment, hour to hour
- Think about what they need to keep them physically safe – like trying to stay warm
- Things that are special to them – reminders of their reasons for living

