



Tip sheet

Suicide and prevention

Understand the facts

What do I need to know?

Suicide is generally defined as any act by which an individual causes herself or himself purposeful death in order to end severe psychological strain and suffering.

Warning signs

- Fantasies of death and/or verbalization of suicidal thoughts to self or others.
- Desire, planning or attempting suicide.
- Gathering the means by which suicide could occur.
- Concern about the effect of suicide on family members.
- Preparation of a will or farewell letter.
- Persistent pessimism or despair.
- Previous attempts at suicide.
- Recent traumatic event in person's life.
- Extreme self-blame for failure.
- Overwhelming news coupled with helplessness.

Self-care

Some recommendations for the person who is experiencing it or if it is someone close:

1. Report to hospital for evaluation, if at all possible.
2. Demonstrate sympathy / empathy / understanding.
3. Listen without judging.
4. Never ignore threats of suicide, much less consider them as "calls for attention". Some verbalisations are: "nothing matters", "I wonder how many people would come to my funeral", "sometimes I would like to sleep forever", "everything would be better without me".
5. Let the affected person know that he/she is not alone.
6. Encourage the affected person not to isolate himself from his family and friends
7. Encourage not to demand too much from himself/herself, delegate tasks
8. Store means of suicide in a safe place.
9. Keep alcohol and drugs (legal and illegal) locked up.
10. Make a plan of contact for evening and next morning: secure a promise for this contact.

Reach out

- Call Emergency Services or visit the hospital emergency room, if you know a loved one is making plans to commit suicide.
- Stay away from alcohol, other drugs and remove access to weapons.
- If you are experiencing suicidal thoughts, contact a local Helpline.
- Contact the [Employee Assistance Program](#) for free, confidential counseling services.

Need more information?

- BeyondBlue: <https://www.beyondblue.org.au/the-facts/suicide-prevention> and <https://www.beyondblue.org.au/the-facts/self-harm-and-self-injury>.
- Black Dog Institute: <https://www.blackdoginstitute.org.au/clinical-resources/suicide-self-harm>.