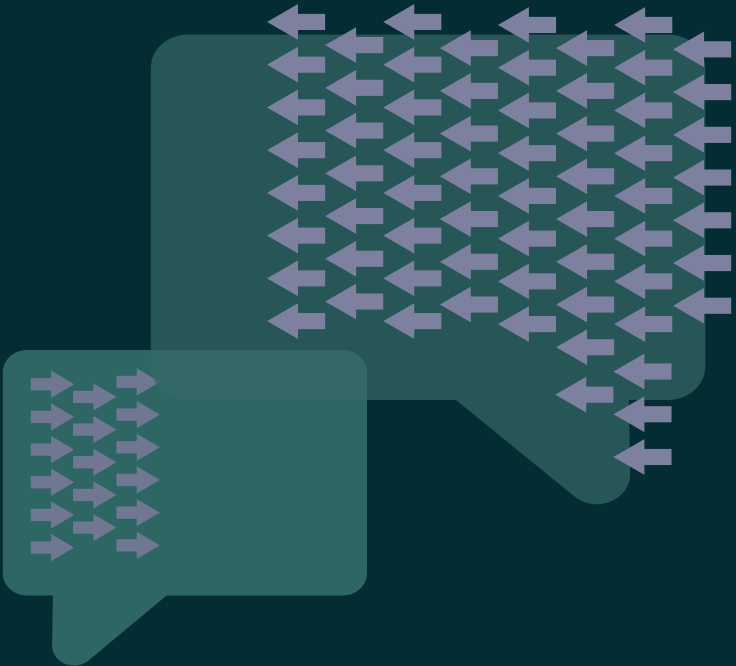


HOW TO TALK ABOUT

# SUICIDE



It can be hard to start conversations about suicide. People are often worried they will say the wrong thing and make a situation worse. According to research carried out by the Samaritans though, asking someone directly if they are having suicidal thoughts can actually protect them as it gives them permission to be open about how they are feeling.

People who have struggled with suicidal thoughts report that they felt relieved when asked directly about their intentions.

Having open conversations might be uncomfortable, but once someone starts talking they're more likely to discover options that aren't suicide.

## If you're worried about someone close to you

- Ask them directly if they are thinking about ending their life
- Always take them seriously
- Don't feel you have to offer solutions, offer support and encourage them to talk
- Offer practical help such as getting them a non-alcoholic drink, offering to call a GP, the Samaritans or someone else, or just offer to sit quietly with them
- Don't promise to keep things secret
- Don't forget to look after yourself.

You can call the Samaritans if you are supporting someone else through suicidal thoughts.

**If you're worried about how a stranger is acting** even interrupting their thoughts with a question or observation may help.

- Introduce yourself
- Ask the person their name
- Ask if they are OK or need help
- Comment on the weather
- Ask where you can buy a coffee
- Ask what the time is.

**In everyday life** the language we use when talking about suicide can make a big difference in how it is perceived and people's willingness to be open about it.

Always try to use person-centered language such as 'person who has died by suicide', rather than language that ignores the person, such as 'suicide victim'.

## DON'T

Use terms like 'committed' suicide as this associates suicide with crime or sin, or 'successful' or 'completed' suicide as this presents suicide as a desired outcome

Refer to 'epidemics' as this can sensationalise

Use the term 'unsuccessful' suicide to avoid glamourising or presenting suicide as a desired outcome

Say 'X is suicidal' as this can define someone solely by their suicidal thoughts.

## DO

Use terms like 'took their own life', 'died by suicide' or 'ended their own life'

Refer to 'concerning' or 'increasing' rates of suicide

Use 'non-fatal' or 'made an attempt on their life'

Use terms like 'X is experiencing suicidal thoughts / suicidal ideation'.

## Where to get help

### IF SOMEONE IS IN IMMEDIATE DANGER ALWAYS CALL 999

**Samaritans Bristol** - 24 hour local and national helplines - call 116 123 (free) or 0117 983 1000

Text: 07725 909090

Email: [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org),

[www.samaritans.org/branches/bristol/](http://www.samaritans.org/branches/bristol/)

### **National Mind InfoLine**

0300 123 3393 Monday to Friday, 9am to 6pm  
(except Bank Holidays)

**AWP 24/7 Mental Health helpline** 0800 953 1919

**Bristol MindLine** out of hours confidential helpline. Freephone: 0808 808 0330

Wednesday to Sunday, 7pm - 11pm

**distrACT app** - information to support people who self-harm and may be experiencing suicidal thoughts

[www.expertselfcare.com/health-apps/distract/](http://www.expertselfcare.com/health-apps/distract/)

**HOPE Project** - offering short term emotional and practical suicide prevention for men

[www.second-step.co.uk/our-services/recovery-mental-health/hope-project/](http://www.second-step.co.uk/our-services/recovery-mental-health/hope-project/)

**Self Injury Support** - for women and girls of all ages affected by self harm.

All services open Tues to Thurs, 7pm to 9.30pm.

Helpline: 0808 800 8088 | Text: 07537 432 444

Email: [tessmail@selfinjurysupport.org.uk](mailto:tessmail@selfinjurysupport.org.uk)

Webchat: [www.tinyurl.com/SISwebchat](http://www.tinyurl.com/SISwebchat)

## **For people bereaved by suicide**

### **Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide**

0300 111 5065 9am-9pm Monday to Sunday

[www.uksobs.org/](http://www.uksobs.org/)

## **For young people**

**AWP 24 hour Emergency Helpline for Children and Young People** - 0800 9539599

**Off the Record** - projects, support and activities for people aged 11 to 25

[www.otrbristol.org.uk/](http://www.otrbristol.org.uk/)

## **Training**

**Zero Suicide Alliance** - a range of free courses to help spot signs and develop skills to approach someone who is struggling

[www.zerosuicidealliance.com/training](http://www.zerosuicidealliance.com/training)

# Local support

## Bristol City Council Mental Health Links

[www.bristol.gov.uk/social-care-health/mental-health-services](http://www.bristol.gov.uk/social-care-health/mental-health-services)

## Samaritans:

call 0117 983 1000 or text 07725 90 90 90

**Well Aware** local directory of health and wellbeing services: 0808 808 5252 or [www.wellaware.org.uk](http://www.wellaware.org.uk)

For more information on language to use around suicide see: [www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org)

This leaflet was designed and produced by the Community Access Support Service (CASS) was a pioneering programme that ran from 2016 to 2023 and worked with community, equality and faith groups to improve knowledge, confidence and awareness of mental health, and support available in Bristol. CASS was delivered by a partnership between Knowle West Health Park, Southmead Development Trust and Wellspring Settlement on behalf of the NHS.

