

## Feeling Suicidal

Many people can feel suicidal at some point in their lives regardless of age, gender, sexuality, relationship and family status etc. Thousands go into hospital each year after harming themselves and many more try to take their own lives. Most of them recover and never try again but a small number succeed in killing themselves. This is why feeling suicidal can be dangerous and needs to be talked about.

Suicidal feelings often occur slowly accompanied by hopelessness and low self worth. Suicidal feelings can be confusing and you may be harming yourself by cutting, biting or burning yourself. You may get into fights or be involved in risk taking behaviour. You may use drugs or alcohol or have an eating disorder. These are all forms of self harm which do not necessarily mean you want to die.

Suicidal feelings and thoughts can be frightening. If you feel you no longer want to be alive, your distress may seem unbearable. You may hate yourself and have thoughts about feeling useless and unwanted. You may experience rage, shame and guilt, and repeated painful experiences can lead to self blame. Faced with unbearable situations, unsolvable difficulties, failures or conflicts, you may start to think that death is your only option. Yet as much as you may want to die, you may also want a solution to problems and difficulties.

Suicidal feelings can be triggered by:

- Isolation or loneliness
- Relationship breakdown
- Drug and alcohol use
- Being bullied
- Financial concerns
- Difficulties or failure in academia and work
- Long-term illness
- Doubts about sexuality
- Sexual, physical or emotional abuse
- Bereavement
- Pregnancy and post-natal depression

In addition to suicidal feelings, you may recognise these in yourself:

- Lack of energy
- Mood swings
- Withdrawing – spending more time alone
- Feelings of guilt or anger
- Impulsive or risk taking behaviour
- Self harm
- Reduced interest in your appearance
- Increased drug or alcohol use
- Disturbed sleep patterns
- Loss of interest in things you used to enjoy
- Unhappiness

## Practical Support

If you are feeling suicidal, you may believe you are beyond help. You may be very hurt or scared of reaching out. If you are angry, it can seem difficult to let someone support you so you may refuse help. Your anger may also result in feeling you do not deserve help. However, you can do something to change how you are feeling such as:

- Talk to someone – partner, friend, GP, relative, counsellor, religious/spiritual leader, positive online discussion groups, the Samaritans, tutor
- Develop a list of things you can do when you are in crisis - breathing exercises, eat your favourite food, watch a movie/TV, get in touch with nature, exercise, use Rescue Remedy, write down your thoughts

- Avoid drugs and alcohol – it's tempting to use them to numb painful feelings but they can make your feelings more volatile and affect your judgment. Drugs and alcohol can increase self harm and suicidal feelings
- Give yourself today – the option of killing yourself is a choice you can make another time. When things are difficult, surviving the upcoming days seem exhausting, overwhelming and unbearable so focus on getting through each day as it comes
- Use the internet wisely – look at positive sites
- Think positive – thinking bad thoughts about yourself makes you feel worse so try to think about the good things you have done today
- Stop risky behaviour
- Do not listen to sad music when you are low
- Medication – if you are taking medication to help with suicidal feelings and it feels they are not working, tell your doctor

**If you are feeling suicidal, the Counselling Service strongly encourages you to seek assistance at the earliest possible time.**

**Useful Contacts:**

- Papyrus            08000 684 141            Advice for young people at risk of suicide
- Samaritans        08457 90 90 90            24 hour helpline offering emotional support
- HOPELineUK     0870 170 4000            Support, information and advice
- Sane                0845 767 8000            Advice and information for those in crisis
- CALM              0800 58 58 58            Advice for men