



5. MY CLUB AND SUICIDE AWARENESS

Understanding Suicide

When someone is thinking about ending their life, it can be a very worrying time for everyone involved. You may find it hard to understand what the individual is going through and you might be uncertain as to how you can help.

Understanding how someone feels when suicidal is really important, they are probably feeling very depressed and see no hope for the future, they may have lost all hope for change and they may believe nothing will get better for them. Their feelings may be overwhelming, they may see themselves as being a burden to those around them and that everyone would be better off without them being around.

They want to end the pain which they are living with and believe that there is no other solution to the problems they face. Although they may have made a plan to end their life many people still wish for and hope for a different option up until the very end. Reaching out for support and connecting with a non-judgemental person who will listen is the first step toward achieving a positive outcome.

Having as many people trained who can support someone in a suicidal crisis is an important step in enabling them to get the right support, when they need it. We recommend all our coaches and managers are trained in Safetalk and if they want further training ASIST. Knowing trained people in your community is a positive step in terms of connecting with them.

The only clear way to know if someone is thinking about suicide is to ask them, sometimes people thinking of suicide may hide the signs so as not to be discovered. *Sometimes we don't recognise the signs even though they may seem obvious when we look back. This is often because we were too close to the situation at the time.*

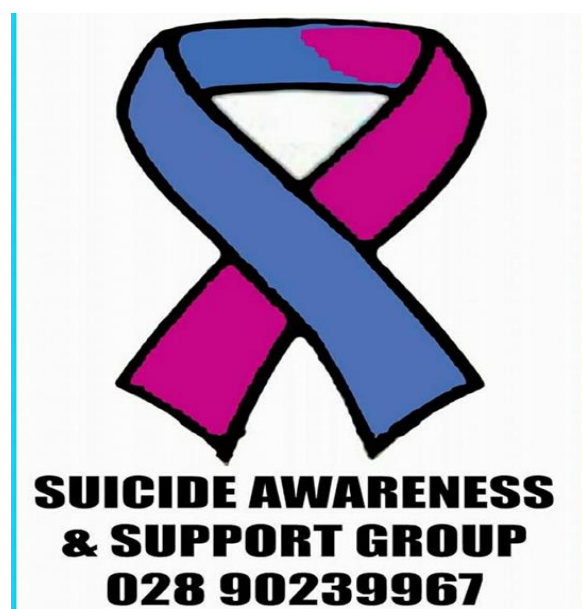
Some Things to watch out for

- Disconnecting from friends and family
- Depression or very low mood
- Negative comments about self
- Threatening suicide
- Talking or writing about suicide
- Sudden change from distress to saying they are OK or everything is ok (This may indicate they have decided to end their life)
- Putting personal affairs in order
- Giving away things they own
- Self-Harm or Suicide attempt

This is not a prescriptive list the only real way to know if someone is thinking about suicide is to ask them directly. There is no evidence to suggest that asking about suicide will not put the thought into someone's head.



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Look after yourself

Supporting someone who is experiencing suicidal thoughts can have an impact on you also.

It is really important to look after your own mental health and to try not to take on more than you feel you can manage or deal with. Put in place support for yourself so that you can continue to give help.

If necessary seek self-support. You are NOT betraying the individual by turning to others for support for yourself. Talking to someone, joining a support group, or confiding in a trusted friend will help you continue to help others. You don't need to go into detail or betray confidentiality; instead focus on your emotions and what you are feeling. Make sure you can be totally honest with the person you turn to — no judging your emotions!

The training also outlined in this toolkit offers individuals the chance to become more suicide alert and enable you to get a person with thoughts of suicide to helping resources. Some of these can be found below.

Finding Support

If you are or someone you know is in distress or despair, call LIFELINE 24/7 Freephone on

0808 808 8000

Samaritans is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for anyone struggling to cope. Call the free helpline on 116 123.

Extern Crisis Team Freephone **0800 085 4808**

Contact a local GP or GP Out of Hours Service: A GP can give you information about the supports available in your area.

The Out Of Hours GP Service for North and West Belfast can be accessed on **028 90 744447** and is based at 64 Crumlin Road, (This centre is located directly opposite the Mater hospital)

In Crisis: Go to or contact the Emergency Department of your nearest general hospital if someone is in immediate danger. You can also contact the emergency services by calling 999 or 112.

www.mindingyourhead.info has information on mental health and the supports and services in Northern Ireland.



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