

Help is
at hand

Feeling
overwhelmed —
helping you
stay safe



The Royal College of Psychiatrists

About this leaflet

Several people have helped to put this leaflet together. Some of us are professionally qualified, some of us have lived through times of great distress ourselves.

We all want to make sure that you know what help you can get to stay safe and how you can get it.

We know that you may feel completely helpless – we're just glad that you have taken the time to read this. In spite of feeling that you have no control over your life, there may be some things that you – and other people – can do to make things better. There will be people who really do want to help. You may know them already, like your family and friends, or they may be professionals who you have not met yet.

When things go wrong

Bad things happen to all of us – but it can be hard to talk about them. Other people may find it difficult to help. They find it hard to know what to say to someone you know who is going through it.

When things go wrong, each of us reacts in a different way. You could feel numbed, agitated or shocked. You may find yourself overwhelmed by your feelings – or cut off from them.

It can feel really lonely when you are distressed. We hope that the information in this leaflet can help you to feel less alone, in spite of your troubles.

A life worth living

It's easy to feel overwhelmed when bad things happen. There may not be a simple answer or the pain may seem just too much to bear. You may even have thoughts that your life is just not worth living. This might be the time to get some help.

Suicidal thoughts are quite common but we tend not to talk about them. It can be embarrassing or frightening to tell someone else about such private thoughts.

And most people with suicidal thoughts manage to keep themselves safe. Being honest with yourself is the first step in keeping yourself safe. If you are reading this leaflet, it could be helpful for you to share your worries and distress with someone else.

It is never too late to take action, even if the situation seems hopeless.

Can anyone understand me?

It can be hard to share private thoughts and feelings. But if you do, it can help, and can be a real way of getting through a bad time. However you feel, and however personal it seems, other people will have gone through similar things and so really can understand something of what you are going through.



Finding help

Finding someone you can trust is the first step. You may have someone in mind already. Talking and being listened to can help you to get things clearer in your mind and feel more hopeful.

Sometimes it can be easier to talk things over with someone who does not know you. It might be hard to believe that someone you haven't met before cares about you and your situation, but there are people who do care and want to listen.

If you are having thoughts of harming yourself in any way, we would encourage you to:

- tell a trusted friend or relative
- make an appointment to see your GP (family doctor)
- contact one of the organisations listed on the leaflet
- go to the Emergency Department (previously called A&E) in your local hospital.

For young people under 18 especially those under 16

It is important to find support from an adult you can talk to and trust. Please don't feel that you have to cope with all your problems alone. Most young people will turn to their parents or carers. If you feel you need support from outside your immediate family, please think about speaking to another relative, your teacher, school counselor, school nurse, youth worker or social worker (if you have one).

Helping yourself

You can help yourself in many ways. You can start by making a 'safety plan' for yourself. This is a plan to help you keep safe – it will work best if you put it together yourself and choose the kind of support that you think will be helpful.

Only you can find your own reasons for living. If you find it hard to see any future at all, it may be time for you to think about allowing someone to help you get through this difficult time.

Making a 'Safety Plan'

A safety plan can help organise your thoughts, so you get the right support at the times you need it. Make a simple list of the things you can do for yourself and the people who you would like to support you. It's easier if we know who we can talk to before we need them. You may want to ask someone else to help you put it together. You may find it helpful to include reminders of the good things in your life and things to look forward to in the future.



A safety plan could include:

- Activities:
 - take part in sports or go for a walk
 - listen to music that makes you feel happy
 - play an instrument, 'air drums'
 - write your feelings down
 - look after a pet, walk a friend's dog
 - do something to help someone else – nothing feels quite as good as knowing we have a purpose in life.
- Names of supportive family and friends.
- Keep a reminder of the people and things you love on your mobile or in your pocket, wallet or purse; some people like to carry photos of people or animals they care about.
- Professional support.
- Voluntary support organisations (see page 9 onwards).
- Things to do if your suicidal thoughts are getting stronger or you can't ignore them.
- Keep this leaflet in a safe place. You never know when you, or someone you care about, might need it.

MY SAFETY PLAN

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.



Helpful suggestions to think about

- Thousands of people are overwhelmed every day ... but find ways to get through these intense feelings – like them, you can get through it.
- You just have to cope with one day at a time.
- Your distress can be a sign that you need to change something in your life.

Support organisations for people who are distressed, are experiencing suicidal thoughts or who self-harm and their families

Anything you tell them will be completely confidential. The volunteers are ordinary people who won't judge you. Some of the most popular organisations are listed below. You may contact as many or as few as you like – it's up to you and it's OK to contact more than one.



PAPYRUS HOPELineUK

Tel: 0800 068 41 41

(Mon to Fri 10am – 5pm and 7pm – 10pm & Weekends 2pm – 5pm).

www.papyrus-uk.org

PAPYRUS aims to prevent young people taking their own lives. A professionally staffed helpline provides support, practical advice and information both to young people worried about themselves, and to anyone concerned that a young person may harm themselves.

PAPYRUS has a range of helpful resources including HOPELineUK contact cards or call 01925 572444 or Fax 01925 240502 for a sample pack.

SAMARITANS

Samaritans:

Tel: 08457 90 90 90 (24/7); email:

jo@samaritans.org. www.samaritans.org

A 24/7 helpline service which gives you a safe space where you can talk about what is happening, how you are feeling, and how to find your own way forward. Samaritans volunteers are ordinary people from all walks of life who understand that there are sometimes things that you just cannot talk about to the people around you. They know that very often, with some time and space, people are able to find their own solution within themselves.

Specialist help for people who self-harm

Get Connected: Tel: 080 8808 4994 (1pm to 11pm). www.getconnected.org.uk

Offers help by telephone and email for young people (under 25) who self-harm.

TheSite.org: www.thesite.org

TheSite.org offers information and support to all the UK's 16 – 25 year-olds. It includes specific support and advice about self-harm.

RecoverYourLife: www.recoveryourlife.com

Internet Self-Harm Support Community. It also provides support for any emotional problems, in addition to self-harm.



Support specifically designed for children and young people

Beatbullying: www.beatbullying.org

Works with children and young people across the UK to stop bullying. We help young people to support each other.



ChildLine: Tel: 08000 111

www.childline.org.uk If you are worried about anything, it could be something big or something small, don't bottle it up. It can really help if you talk to someone. If there is something on your mind, ChildLine is here for you.

Selfharm.co.uk: www.selfharm.co.uk

Website for for young people aged 11 to 19 affected by self harm. E: info@selfharm.co.uk

YoungMinds: www.youngminds.org.uk

is committed to improving the emotional wellbeing and mental health of children and young people, they have lots of information.

Other sources of support



Big White Wall: www.bigwhitewall.com

A safe, online, anonymous service for people over the age of 16. Find the support of others who feel just like you 24/7 and learn ways to feel better and how to get on top of your own troubles.



Community Advice & Listening Line
Mental Health Helpline for Wales

0800132 737

Llinell Gyngor a Gwrando'r Gymuned
Llinell Gymorth Iechyd Meddwl ar gyfer Cymru

Call Helpline (Wales): Tel: 0800 132 737

www.callhelpline.com. A 24/7 service offering free emotional support and information/literature on mental health and related matters to people in Wales. Text 'help' to 81066.



CALM: Campaign Against Living Miserably: Tel: 0800 585858 www.thecalmzone.net

Offers help via the website and a helpline for men aged 15 to 35 who are feeling depressed or down. Callers are offered support and information. Calls are free, confidential and anonymous. The helpline is open from 5pm – midnight, Sat, Sun, Mon and Tues, every week of the year. London callers may also call 0800 585858 or text 07537 404717, begin the first text CALM1.



Consumer Counselling Credit Services:

www.cccs.co.uk

Free online support service providing anonymous and practical advice about money matters and debt.

CRUSE Bereavement Care:

Helpline: 0844 477 9400

email: helpline@cruse.org.uk

www.crusebereavementcare.org.uk



Depression Alliance:

Tel: 0845 123 23 20

www.depressionalliance.org

Information, support and understanding for people who suffer with depression, and for relatives who want to help. Self-help groups, information, and raising awareness for depression.

Email: information@depressionalliance.org

Depression UK: www.depressionuk.org

A national mutual support group for people suffering from depression. Email:

info@depressionuk.org

Drinksmarter: Helpline: 0800 7 314 314

www.drinksmarter.org Call free and at anytime to talk to someone in confidence.

Mind: Infoline: 0300 123 3393

(Mon – Fri 9am – 6pm). www.mind.org.uk

Provides information in a range of topics including types of mental distress, where to get help and advocacy. They are able to provide details of help and support for people in their own area. Email: info@mind.org.uk

National Debtline: Tel: 0808 808 4000

www.nationaldebtline.co.uk

Free confidential and independent advice won how to deal with debt problems.

NHS Direct: Tel: 0845 46 47

www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk For health advice and reassurance, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

SANE: SANEline: 0845 767 8000

(6pm – 11pm). www.sane.org.uk

Emotional support and specialist information to anyone affected by mental illness, including families, friends and carers. SANE offers 1:1 support via helpline and email services and peer support via an online Support Forum where people share their feelings and experiences of mental illness, as well as exchanging information about treatment and support options.

Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide (SOBS):

Helpline: 0844 561 6855 (9am – 9pm daily).

www.uk-sobs.org.uk



UK National Drugs helpline:

Tel: 0800 77 66 00. A 24/7 service offering free and confidential telephone advice and information for anyone who is concerned, or has questions, about drugs.

Support Groups: www.patient.co.uk

Details of UK patient support organisations, self-help groups, health and disease information providers, etc. Each entry is crossreferenced and details are checked annually.

Specific support for people living in Scotland

Action on Depression Tel: 0808 802 2020

(Wed 2 – 4pm); Email:

info@actiondepression.org;

www.actiondepression.org

The National Scottish organisation working with and for people affected by depression.

Breathing Space Tel: 0800 83 85 87 open

24/7 at weekends (6pm Fri – 6am Mon);

6pm to 2am on Mon – Thurs.

www.breathingspacescotland.co.uk.

Phone and web-based service for people in Scotland experiencing low mood, depression or anxiety.

CRUSE Bereavement Care Scotland

Tel: 0845 600 2227;

www.crusescotland.org.uk

NHS24 Tel: 08454 24 24 24;

www.nhs24.com

Open 24/7 356 days a year.

SAMH – Scottish Association for Mental

Health Tel: 0800 917 3466; email@

info@samh.org.uk; www.samh.org.uk

Information on how and where to find support, including help in your own area.

Online version of this leaflet providing support for people in distress and those trying to help them

www.connectingwithpeople.org/ucancope



Awyr Las
Blue Sky

Am iechyd gwell yng Ngogledd Cymru
For brighter, better health in North Wales



Royal College of
General Practitioner



Connecting
with People



The College of
Emergency Medicine



Royal College
of Nursing

Endorsed by the Royal College of General Practitioners and the Royal College of Nursing.



The Royal College of Psychiatrists produces:

- a wide range of mental health information for patients, carers and professionals
- factsheets on treatment in psychiatry, such as antidepressants and Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT)
- many of our leaflets and factsheets have been translated into other languages including Arabic, Urdu, Polish and French.

A range of materials for carers of people with mental health problems has also been produced by the 'Partners in Care' campaign. These can be downloaded from www.partnersincare.co.uk.

For a catalogue of our materials, contact the Leaflets Department, Royal College of Psychiatrists, 17 Belgrave Square, London SW1X 8PG. Tel: + 44 (0)20 7235 2351 ext. 6259; Fax: + 44 (0)20 7 235 1935; Email: leaflets@rcpsych.ac.uk.

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This leaflet reflects the best available evidence at the time of writing.

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NO HEALTH WITHOUT MENTAL HEALTH



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