

## Coping with thoughts of Suicide

**If you are thinking about suicide, you are not alone.**

**Feeling like you want to end your life is distressing and overwhelming – however, there are things you can do that might help you counter these thoughts.**

**If you are feeling suicidal or want to end your life, it's important that you keep yourself safe. Try to remember that thoughts about suicide are just thoughts.**

Having these thoughts doesn't mean you have to act on them, no matter how overwhelming they are or how often you have them. You should also remind yourself that despite going having these thoughts right now, it doesn't mean that you will always have these thoughts and they will pass.

**You can regain control.**

While it's not uncommon to experience times when you feel utterly hopeless or completely unable to cope, however it is possible to get through these difficult times by creating your own 'tool kit' of coping strategies which you can use when you're feeling suicidal or when things feel hopeless.

### ***Postpone any decision to end your life***

While it may feel like you have to act now on your thoughts of suicide, try to postpone that decision for 24 hours - this will give you the chance to talk to a friend or loved-one, get advice or assistance from a health expert, or simply for the feelings your experiencing to pass.

Many people report that by putting off a decision to die, they found that their life did change. They were able to get the support they needed and could move on to a better, happier place.

### ***Develop a safety plan***

Think of your safety plan as your 'mental health first-aid kit'; it includes many different things that will help you through a crisis. Having a safety plan can help you feel more in control when everything feels out of control. It puts all your coping tools in a series of steps:

- Recognising your warning signs
- Making your surroundings safe
- Reminders of reasons to live
- Things that can make you feel strong
- People and places to connect with
- Family and friends you can talk or yarn with
- Professional support

BeyondBlue have developed an App that can help you build a Safety Plan online or on your smartphone so that it is available to you wherever you are if and when you experience feelings of hopelessness or think about ending your life. It's available online via:

<https://www.beyondblue.org.au/get-support/beyondnow-suicide-safety-planning>

### ***Why talking helps***

Maybe you feel that there's no one you can trust to help you, or that you just don't fit in with the people around you. Sometimes it's difficult to reach out to others for support, but contact with others can make a real difference.

**If you think you need to talk to someone about how you're feeling but there's no one around that you trust, contact Lifeline on 13 11 14.**

**If you are in crisis, call Triple-0.**

Talking can provide stress relief and can lighten the load of a particular concern that someone might be having. When someone opens up and talks about what's happening for them, they can start to break down problems into smaller parts, which can help to reduce that feeling of being overwhelmed.

Sometimes choosing someone outside of the situation you're struggling with can help to alter your perspective and shed a new light on an issue that's been troubling you or making you feel hopeless.



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### **Tell Someone**

Although it may seem hard and may seem like a bigger challenge than taking steps to end your life, it's important to reach out to others who might help you to see alternative ways of solving or thinking about the problem(s) you're facing. This could also help you to realise what is important to you, allowing you to have a more positive outlook.

You could tell a family member or friend, counsellor or any person that you feel comfortable with. If they don't believe you or don't want to listen, keep trying until someone else does. Sometimes people don't react well at first because they are scared and don't know how. This is not your fault.

If you find it hard to talk about, try writing something down and giving the paper to the other person.

### **Some coping strategies**

- **Write down your thoughts and/or feelings**

Writing down your thoughts and/or feelings, or keeping a journal, can be a great way of understanding your feelings and your responses to a particular situation. It can also help you think about alternative solutions to problems over time and develop a new perspective.

- **Set small goals**

Try to set goals that are achievable for you, even if it's on a day by day, or hour by hour, basis. Don't forget to treat yourself when you've achieved your goal.

- **Exercise and eat well**

Looking after your body is an important part of looking after your mind. Make sure to take time to exercise, even for 20 minutes a few times a week. Try and get a good night's sleep (aim for at least 7 hours) and eat well.

- **Avoid drugs and alcohol**

Using drugs and alcohol may help you forget about your problems for a little while but when the effects wear off you'll often just feel worse. Over time, drug and alcohol use can fuel depression and make it harder for you to cope with the challenges that you are facing.

- **Talk to a counsellor**

A counsellor can help you with issues that may be causing you to think of suicide, and work on safe and healthy ways to deal with your distress. Sometimes, just having an ear to speak to can help put problems into perspective or make you feel less alone.

- **Seek assistance from a GP**

Your GP can provide you with an overarching healthcare plan that takes into account your overall physical health and mental wellbeing. This might include referrals to mental health specialists (for example a clinical psychologist) or the prescription of anti-depressant medication.

### **In an emergency or crisis**

If you are experiencing a crisis, are considering ending your own life or you have already harmed yourself in any way, **call 000 and request an ambulance**. Stay on the line with the operator until the ambulance arrives.

