



Parental Guidance: Suicidal Ideation

Discovering that your child has expressed suicidal thoughts can be deeply distressing and overwhelming. It is natural to feel unsure about how best to support them. This leaflet provides guidance to help you navigate this challenging situation and ensure your child receives the care and assistance they need.

Suicidal thoughts can stem from a variety of emotional struggles, including stress, trauma, or feelings of hopelessness. It is important to acknowledge their feelings, provide reassurance, and seek appropriate professional support. Taking these thoughts seriously and responding with compassion can make a significant difference in your child's well-being.

Immediate Support and Contact Information

Contact the CAMHS Duty Line for support and guidance:

- Phone: 020 3228 5980
- Availability: Monday to Friday 5pm-10pm, Saturday to Sunday 9am-10pm

Practical Steps to Ensure Safety

To reduce immediate risks, please consider the following:

- Remove access to sharp objects such as knives, scissors, razors, and pencil sharpeners. Store them securely out of reach.
- Secure all medications in a locked cabinet or a safe location to prevent access.
- Supervise your child as much as possible to ensure they are not isolating themselves. Encourage them to spend time with trusted family members and engage in calming activities.
- Monitor changes in their behaviour and maintain open communication. Reassure them that they are not alone and that help is available.

Further concerns

Go to A&E at Queen Elizabeth Hospital if you have significant concerns about your child's immediate safety, if there is any escalation in their self-harm behaviors, if there is an immediate risk of harm, or if they require urgent medical attention. The CAMHS Crisis Team is located there and can provide emergency support.



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Beyond Immediate Actions

- **Communicate Openly:** Maintain open and honest communication with your child. Encourage them to express their feelings and concerns.
- **Address Underlying Issues:** Explore potential triggers and underlying issues contributing to self-harm, such as depression, anxiety, trauma, or bullying.
- **Develop Coping Strategies:** Work with your child and a therapist to develop healthy coping strategies for managing difficult emotions.

Supporting Conversations

- **Stay Calm and Listen:** Try to remain calm and create a safe space for your child to express themselves without judgment or interruption.
- **Acknowledge Their Pain:** Validate their feelings by acknowledging their pain and distress. Avoid dismissing their experiences or offering simplistic solutions.
- **Express Your Concern:** Let your child know you're concerned and want to understand what they're going through. Reassure them that you're there to support them.
- **Avoid Blame and Guilt:** Refrain from blaming yourself or your child. Self-harm is often a complex issue with multiple contributing factors.
- **Focus on Support:** Emphasize your love and support. Let your child know they're not alone and that you'll work together to find help.

External support

There are a number of external organisations that can support both you and your child

- **Kooth** - A free, safe, and anonymous online mental health and wellbeing service available to all young people aged 10-25.
- **Young Minds** - The UK's leading mental health charity for children, young people and their parents, making sure all young people get the mental health support they need
- **Papyrus** - A UK charity dedicated to the prevention of suicide and promoting positive mental health and emotional well being in children.