



Suicide Prevention: Everybody's Business

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Welcome

Wellbeing

Discussion about suicide can be challenging and emotive – it is important we consider our own wellbeing and seek support when we need it.

<https://linktr.ee/findhelpmh>



Areas to cover during session

- The importance of language
- The local context for suicide prevention
- Challenging myths about suicide
- Communication – what can you do?
- What training offers are available
- Key resources and information
- Details of local and national support and services

The importance of language and terminology

Language matters when talking about suicide

Stigma can prevent people from asking for help – they may feel ashamed and reluctant to ask for help

Stigma around suicide can also prevent others from offering support, for fear of saying or doing the wrong thing.

Talking openly can help break down barriers

Inappropriate or careless use of language can sensationalise, depersonalise or glorify a death

It can also cause distress to those who have been bereaved by suicide

Always avoid language that criminalises suicide

The importance of language and terminology

Do use

- **A suicide**
- **Taken his/her/their own life**
- **Ended his/her/their own life**
- **Died by/death by suicide**
- **Having thoughts of suicide**
- **Help seeking**
- **Coroner's conclusion**
- **Name of the person who died (or ask those bereaved how they would like their loved one referred to)**

Avoid Using

- Committed suicide
- Successful/unsuccessful suicide attempt
- Failed suicide attempt
- Completed/uncompleted suicide
- Cry for help
- (name) is suicidal – don't define someone as this
- Coroner's verdict
- The body/suicide victim
- Suicide epidemic/wave/hotspot



The local context for suicide prevention



What makes suicide prevention important?

Suicide can have a devastating impact on families, friends, neighbours, colleagues and whole communities. Every life lost to suicide is a tragedy.

The [national suicide rate has not fallen since 2018](#) - there are over 5,000 deaths by suicide in England each year.

Preventing deaths by suicide needs action from Government and health & care services, and from voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) organisations, from education and businesses, communities, and individuals.

We all have a role to play in challenging stigma, improving understanding about mental health and wellbeing, and developing the knowledge, skills and confidence to have mental wellbeing conversations.

Suicide prevention is everybody's business.

Suicide Rates 2022 - 2024

Devon	Count	Rate per 100,000		England
Persons	297	13.5	● higher	10.9
Male	221	20.9	● higher	16.8
Female	76	6.6	● similar	5.5

District	Count	Rate per 100,000	
East Devon	47	11.8	● similar
Exeter	63	18.2	● higher
Mid Devon	38	18.2	● higher
North Devon	39	14.7	● similar
South Hams	25	8.7	● similar
Teignbridge	32	8.8	● similar
Torridge	26	14.8	● similar
West Devon	27	16.9	● similar

Real Time Surveillance

Primary purpose – **timely bereavement support**

Identifying trends or themes:

- Public places
- Method – novel
- Possible clusters
- U25 deaths

Support multi-agency communication and response

ICS wide – covering Devon, Plymouth and Torbay

Suicide Prevention Priorities

6 key priority areas

- Improving data and evidence
- Promoting online safety and responsible media content
- Providing effective crisis support
- Reducing access to means and methods of suicide
- Providing effective bereavement support (“postvention”)
- Making suicide prevention everybody’s business

Priority groups

- Children and young people
- Middle-aged men
- People who have self-harmed
- People in contact with mental health services
- People in contact with the justice system
- Autistic/neurodiverse people
- Pregnant women and new mothers
- Inclusion Health groups (particularly homeless and vulnerably housed)
- People who are unemployed

Population risk factors

- Physical illness
- Financial difficulty and economic adversity
- Harmful gambling
- Substance misuse
- Domestic abuse
- Social isolation and loneliness
- Bereavement
- Relationship breakdown

Challenging myths about suicide

There are many myths around suicide that can influence the way we think and make it harder to recognise the signs.

They can also make those at risk feel misunderstood, inadequate or alone

Understanding the facts can help you to help someone who may be struggling to cope.

Fact...

A suicidal person won't ask for help and if someone is determined to end their own life there is nothing we can do.

People who talk about suicide don't do it. People who make repetitive remarks about feeling suicidal are not genuine.

Asking about suicide may give someone the idea to do it.

It's a selfish act and the easy way out.

It's attention seeking.

You have to be mentally ill to think about suicide

...or
fiction?



Myth: A suicidal person won't ask for help and if someone is determined to end their own life there is nothing we can do.

Fact: Not everyone who thinks about suicide will tell someone but there may be warning signs through what they say or do. However, they may not always be easy to notice.

Myth: People who talk about suicide don't do it. People who make repetitive remarks about feeling suicidal are not genuine.

Fact: The fact that someone tells you does not mean they are less at risk of taking their own life.

Myth: Asking about suicide may give someone the idea to do it.

Fact: Research shows that asking direct questions about suicide helps to protect someone's life and does not put the idea into someone's head.

Myth: It's a selfish act and the easy way out.

Fact: People who are suicidal often think about and consider other people and worry about their loved ones. They may truly feel everyone will be better off without them

Myth: It's attention seeking.

Fact: They are drawing attention to the fact they are in crisis and need help. It is important you always take this seriously by reaching out and asking.

Myth: You have to be mentally ill to think about suicide.

Fact: 1 in 5 people have thought about suicide at some time in their life. And not all people who die by suicide have mental health problems at the time they die

Signs that someone may not be ok

Many people struggle to cope at one point or another of their lives.

Everyone copes and reacts in their own way, but there are some general signs to look out for.

For some people, several of these signs might apply - for others just one or two, or none.

You might not always be able to spot these signs. These emotions may be more difficult to spot if you're seeing less of the people you're close to.

It can also be useful to understand circumstances that can trigger suicidal thoughts or make it hard for someone to cope.

Communication – what can you do?

Reach out and start the conversation – “you don’t seem like yourself”, “How are you?” Ask twice as you may get a more honest response.

Don’t worry about saying the wrong thing. People who have felt suicidal will often say what a huge relief it was to be able to talk about what they were experiencing.

Ask open questions to understand more and reassure them that they matter.

Ask about suicide “Are you having thoughts about suicide?” “Are you thinking about ending your life?” Be prepared that the answer may be yes.

Giving your full attention and listening is extremely powerful and helpful.
You don’t have to have all the answers

Communication – what can you do?

Empathise with them and avoid blame. Try not to judge or give advice.

Validation – acknowledging and accepting another person's emotions, thoughts and experiences. The most important thing in moments of crisis is to have someone alongside them.

Reassure them that it will not always be like this, and that intensity of feelings can reduce in time.

Many suicide attempts are impulsive. Delaying allows time for those intense feelings to subside.

Get help – encourage them to seek help that they are comfortable with. For example, help from a doctor or counsellor, or support through a crisis charity such as the Samaritans.

‘OK to talk about suicide’ resource: [online](#) and z-cards

Devon County Council area - Training offers

Training to upskill workforces and communities – encourage conversations, challenge stigma, promote self-care

- **Zero Suicide Alliance e-learning**

Free suicide awareness e-learning on the [Zero Suicide Alliance website](#) It provides a great introduction to suicide awareness along with key skills to use to have a conversation with someone you are worried about.

- **Connect 5**

[Connect 5](#) takes a preventative approach to poor mental wellbeing. The training is designed to equip individuals with the skills and confidence to have effective conversations about mental wellbeing, recognising needs and signposting to support. It focuses on building confidence and knowledge to support both personal wellbeing and that of others.

[Youth Connect 5](#) - A new course available in Devon, Youth Connect 5 training provides the knowledge, skills and understanding to help children and young people develop strong emotional wellbeing through resilience-building techniques

- **ASIST – Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training**

Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST) is a two-day interactive workshop, learning how to recognise when someone may be thinking about suicide, and how to provide a skilled intervention & develop a safety plan with them to connect to further support

Key resources and information



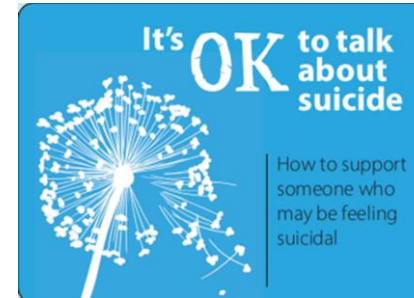
Resources

[OK to Talk About Suicide](#) – the content is available online, and hard copy Z-cards can be requested

Devon: publichealth-mailbox@devon.gov.uk

Plymouth: ODPH@plymouth.gov.uk

Torbay: publichealth@torbay.gov.uk



[Devon Partnership NHS Trust 'Letter of Hope' resources](#) – The Letter of Hope, Letter for Tomorrow and Hope Letter have been written by adults, young people and people with learning disabilities from Devon, who wish to offer help and hope to those who are thinking about suicide. Audio versions also available.

[Help is at Hand](#) if you have been affected by suicide this contains useful, practical information about dealing with your feelings and getting support.

[First Hand](#) is a resource booklet for anyone affected by the suicide of someone they didn't know (for example, bystander, first responders).

Resources

Mental Health Safety Plan – the content is [available online](#), in downloadable PDF, and hard copy z-cards

The resource is a simple to use safety plan, available to anyone. To capture information about:

- Things that help you feel happy and well
- Things that can be a sign you are struggling
- People and services that can help you
- Signposting to local & national services

Z-cards from:

Devon: publichealth-mailbox@devon.gov.uk

Plymouth: ODPH@plymouth.gov.uk

Torbay: publichealth@torbay.gov.uk



Where to find a safety plan

- [Creating a 'safety plan' | Samaritans](#)
- ['Grassroots Stay Alive'](#) app (women specific also available)

Other templates are available online - you may find an alternative one that is more suitable for you, or the person you are supporting

Pete's Dragons

Suicide Bereavement Service for Devon, Plymouth and Torbay -
Commissioned by NHS Devon

Support for anyone impacted by suicide - available for adults and children.

No waiting lists - support begins within 48 hours of contact and it continues for as long as needed.

Pete's Dragons –

contact via support@petesdragons.org.uk or on 01395 277780

Crisis Support

[Samaritans](#) 24/7 support – call 116 123

[Childline](#) call 0800 1111 24/7 (for u19s)

[SHOUT 24/7](#) text support - text the word 'Shout' to 85258

[First Response](#) Devon Partnership Trust for Devon & Torbay, Live Well South West for Plymouth – call 111 for crisis support for adults & CYP

Other local support – not crisis

[Mental Health Matters](#) - offer mental health support to anyone aged 18+ in the Devon area, from three locations in Barnstaple, Exeter, and Torquay. Offer support in person, over the phone, or via video call – opening hours and contact numbers specific to location, see website for details

[Devon Mental Health Alliance Drop Ins](#) - Mental Health and Recovery Drop-ins are a free, non-clinical space for adults affected by mental health challenges to connect with others, access support, and learn new skills.

Promoting Wellbeing

[Every Mind Matters](#) – we all need good mental health and wellbeing: get tips, advice and support to help boost your mental wellbeing

[CALM resources](#) – information, tools and guides and tailored topic specific information

[Young Minds](#) - resources including wellbeing activities, toolkits, & webinars to help you support the young people in your life

Promoting Wellbeing

5 ways to wellbeing

The [Five Ways to Wellbeing](#) are simple steps you can take to help you feel more positive and able to get the most out of life.



Connect

- Good relationships and connecting with others are important to build a sense of belonging and self-worth and give you an opportunity to share positive experiences.

Be active

- Being active is not only great for your physical health and fitness – it can also boost your mood

Learn

- Learning new skills and doing new things can improve your mental wellbeing by boosting self-confidence and helping you to build a sense of purpose.

Give

- Acts of giving and kindness can help to improve your mental wellbeing by creating positive feelings, a sense of reward and self-worth.

Notice

- Paying more attention to the present moment can improve your mental wellbeing.

Questions?



Next steps: call to action

Complete the Zero Suicide Alliance e-learning

Get copies of the 'OK to talk about suicide' and 'safety plan' z-cards

Get copies of the '5 ways to wellbeing' postcards, or poster

Thank you and take care

Reminder – importance of our own wellbeing

seek support when we need it

<https://linktr.ee/findhelpmh>