



Stay Alive App: Content Pack

Introduction

This document is designed to give you an overview of what's included in the Stay Alive App.

This app has been developed by Grassroots Suicide Prevention who is a charity that supports communities to prevent suicide. They teach suicide prevention skills to community members and professionals. They work hard to raise awareness of suicide prevention and to reduce the stigma surrounding suicide. Grassroots Suicide Prevention is not a crisis service.

Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Introduction..... | 2 |
| How to use this app..... | 4 |
| About Stay Alive | 4 |
| Disclaimer..... | 5 |
| Worried about someone? | 6 |
| Potential Warning Signs | 6 |
| Practical Steps to Help | 7 |
| Things to avoid | 7 |
| In a public place..... | 7 |
| Supporter Resources..... | 8 |
| Summary | 8 |
| Find Help Now..... | 9 |
| National Crisis Support for people thinking about suicide | 9 |
| Anyone | 9 |
| Anyone under 35 | 10 |
| Anyone under 25 | 10 |
| Children | 10 |
| Men only | 11 |

| | |
|--|----|
| Mental Illness..... | 11 |
| Older people | 12 |
| Scotland | 12 |
| Northern Ireland..... | 12 |
| Others Resources:..... | 13 |
| Suicide Prevention websites: UK National suicide prevention resources..... | 13 |
| Online support and info: support websites, forums & information | 13 |
| Counselling: talking to someone independent can help | 14 |
| Other Apps: | 14 |
| Suicide Bereavement organisations: | 14 |
| My Own Resources: | 15 |
| Stay Alive | 16 |
| Are you thinking about suicide?..... | 16 |
| My Safety Plan | 17 |
| Reasons for living | 17 |
| My Lifebox: Photo section | 19 |
| Staying Safe For Now..... | 19 |
| Self Help Ideas | 20 |
| Breathing Exercises..... | 20 |
| Grounding Techniques | 21 |
| Looking After Yourself | 22 |
| Counselling..... | 23 |
| Myths About Suicide..... | 23 |
| Common misunderstandings and misconceptions about suicide: | 23 |
| Further Information..... | 27 |

How to use this app

Stay alive is a pocket suicide prevention resource. People can use it if they are having thoughts of suicide or if you are concerned about someone else who may be considering suicide. They are only a few presses away from crisis support if they need it.

The app has features that people can personalise listed below: -

- 👁️ A **'Safety Plan'** to use if you have a crisis and need to keep yourself safe
- 👁️ You can upload photos from your phone in the **'LifeBox'**
- 👁️ Add your own crisis support phone numbers in **'Find Help Now'**
- 👁️ Fill in your **'Reasons For Living'**
- 👁️ Add to a list of ideas for **'Taking Care of Yourself'**

It can be helpful to fill in these parts at a time you/they are feeling okay, so that they are there when you/they need them. Don't worry if you/they don't want to fill them out; the app still has lots of helpful information and resources.

About Stay Alive

Stay Alive is a confidential app. The app has been developed by Grassroots Suicide Prevention and built by Switchplane. Stay Alive was initially funded by Network Rail and Sussex Partnership Foundation Trust. Thank you to all the people who provided feedback and helped us in developing this app!

Grassroots Suicide Prevention is a charity that supports communities to prevent suicide. We teach suicide prevention skills to community members and professionals. We work hard to raise awareness of suicide prevention and to reduce the stigma surrounding suicide. Grassroots Suicide Prevention is not a crisis service.

Disclaimer

This app is intended as a self-help tool and is not intended as a substitute for professional services. Please seek help from a crisis service, doctor or mental health service if you are thinking about suicide. The app contains information about where you can find help. Please visit the **'How to use this app'** section for more information. We hope this app is helpful to you and offers you some hope and support.

Worried about someone?

Potential Warning Signs

Identify if someone could be suicidal:

You may have noticed that someone is not behaving as they normally would, or have the feeling that something is not right with that person. People who are thinking about suicide often find ways to let us know that they need help, whether they are doing this consciously or not. We could call these ‘warning signs’.

Here are some potential signs that might let you know that someone could be thinking about suicide.

- 🔥 **Actions:** Giving possessions away, writing a will, behaving in risky ways (taking risks to their safety), becoming withdrawn, increasing use of drugs or alcohol, stockpiling medication.
- 🔥 **Talking about:** Feeling that people would be better off without them, that their life has no purpose, saying that they would be better off dead, wanting a way out of pain or a difficult situation.
- 🔥 **Having a sense of feeling:** hopeless, helpless, depressed, guilty, ashamed.
- 🔥 **Life situations involving loss or stress:** e.g. abuse of some kind, bereavement, relationship breakdown, failing exams, rejection, financial difficulties.

No list is complete, and people are very individual. Be alert to changes in someone that might cause you to be worried. Any of these ‘warning signs’ might not be connected with thoughts of suicide. The only way to be sure whether someone is thinking about suicide is to ask. (See **‘Practical Steps / Asking about Suicide’** section).

Practical Steps to Help

Things to avoid

Tips on what not to do or say:

- 👁️ Telling the person why you think they should stay alive (listening is much more helpful).
- 👁️ Trying to fix the person's problems or offering solutions to their feelings.
- 👁️ Trying to cheer the person up or distract them from their thoughts of suicide.
- 👁️ Saying 'I know how you feel'.
- 👁️ Judging the person or their experience.
- 👁️ Panicking.
- 👁️ Denying their feelings.

It can be important to remember that it's not your responsibility to change the person's mind about suicide, and to know that just being there will help.

In a public place

You may see someone in a public place who you think is at risk of suicide. If it is safe for you to do so, try to follow these steps:

- 👁️ Send someone else to get help if possible.
- 👁️ Engage the person in conversation.
- 👁️ Don't be afraid to ask if they're thinking about suicide.
- 👁️ Listen without judgement and help them talk about what has brought them to this point.
- 👁️ Reassure them help is available and offer to contact a helpline if they would like you to do this. See the '**Find Help Now**' section.
- 👁️ Stay with them until help is in place.
- 👁️ Keep yourself safe – never endanger your safety to help someone else.

Supporter Resources

For when you are supporting someone suicidal:

If you are supporting someone who is suicidal, it is important to remember your own needs and to look after yourself too. See the **'Looking after Yourself'** section. Supporting someone thinking about suicide can be difficult and uncomfortable. Finally, keep yourself safe – never endanger your safety to help someone else. These websites about helping someone with thoughts of suicide provide additional information and resources.

www.HealthScotland.com – the art of conversation

www.conversationsmatter.com.au – conversations matter

www.mind.org.uk – search within 'Information & Support' for 'Helping someone else' then 'Suicide - supporting someone else'.

Summary

- ✓ **Ask a clear and direct question about suicide**
- ✓ **Listen without judgement**
- ✓ **Find out what kind of help they would appreciate**
- ✓ **Help the person get help**
- 🕒 Call an ambulance or the police if you think they are in danger - **Emergency 999**
- 🕒 If you need think they need non-emergency medical help fast - **NHS 111 Service**
- 🕒 Or take them to your local A&E if you can get there. You can go to, or call, your nearest accident or emergency department and tell the staff team that they are thinking about suicide.
- 🕒 Call the Samaritans – They are a 24hour essential listening service providing emotional support for anyone in crisis. Call **116 123 (UK), 116 123 (ROI)** or send an email jo@samaritans.org or visit the website www.samaritans.org
- 🕒 Call a family member, friend or partner or other trusted person

Find Help Now

National Crisis Support for people thinking about suicide

Anyone

Emergency 999: Call an ambulance or the police if you're in danger

NHS 111 Service: If you need non-emergency medical help fast

NHS A&E: Go to your local A&E if you can get there. You can go to, or call, your nearest accident or emergency department and tell the staff team that you are thinking about suicide, or about a person who is thinking about suicide

Samaritans:

They are a 24 hour confidential, listening service providing emotional support to anyone in crisis.

Tel: 116 123 (freephone) calls to this helpline number do not appear on phone bills

Email: jo@samaritans.org

Web: www.Samaritans.org

Anyone under 35

Papyrus – HOPELineUK:

A national confidential helpline for any young people (under 35) at risk of suicide, or anyone worried about a young person at risk of suicide.

Helpline opening times: 10am-10pm weekdays, 2pm-10pm weekends, 2pm-5pm Bank Holidays

Email: pat@papyrus-uk.org

Tel: 0800 068 41 41

Text: 07786 209697

Web: www.papyrus-uk.org

Anyone under 25

The Mix:

The UK's free, confidential helpline service for young people under 25 who need help, but don't know where to turn. Open 365 days a year, for absolutely anything you're going through.

Helpline and webchat opening times: 11am-11pm 365 days a year

Email: info@themix.org.uk

Web: www.themix.org.uk

Tel: 0808 808 4994

Children

Childline:

Help and advice about a wide range of issues. Calls are free and confidential. Services include the helpline, online chat, Ask Sam and Toolbox via Your Locker.

Tel: 0800 1111 (Talk to Childline from any phone for free without needing credit or it showing on the phone bill)

Email: Use your Childline Locker to send an email to a counsellor. You'll get a reply within a day. And you can write again whenever you want.

Website: www.childline.org.uk

Men only

CALM:

The Campaign Against Living Miserably offers confidential, anonymous and free support information and signposting to men anywhere in the UK through their helpline.

Helpline opening times: 5pm – midnight 365 days a year

Tel: 0800 585858 (calls are free from landlines, payphones and all mobiles)

Text: 07537 404717

Web: www.thecalmzone.net

Mental Illness

SANE:

A national, out-of-hours mental health helpline offering specialist emotional support and information to anyone affected by mental illness, including family, friends and carers.

Helpline opening times: Open every day of the year from 6pm to 11pm.

Tel: 0300 304 7000 (landline calls are charged at standard local rate, same for mobiles – but is included within contracted mobile minutes)

Email: sanemail@sane.org.uk

Web: www.sane.org.uk

Mind:

They provide information on a range of topics including; types of mental health problems, where to get help, medication and alternative treatments and advocacy. They will look for details of help and support in your own area.

Tel: 0300 123 3393 (landline calls are charged at standard local rate, same for mobiles – but is included within contracted mobile minutes)

Text: 86463

Email: info@mind.org.uk

Web: www.mind.org.uk

Older people

The Silver Line:

The only free confidential helpline providing information, friendship and advice to older people, open 24 hours a day every day of the year.

Tel: 0800 470 80 90

Web: www.thesilverline.org.uk

Scotland

Breathing Space:

A free, confidential phone and web based service for people in Scotland experiencing low mood, depression or anxiety. Breathing Space provides a safe and supportive space by listening, and offering advice and information.

Helpline opening times: 24 hours at weekends (6pm Friday - 6am Monday), 6pm to 2am on weekdays (Monday - Thursday).

Tel: 0800 83 85 87

Website: www.breathingspacescotland.co.uk

Northern Ireland

Lifeline:

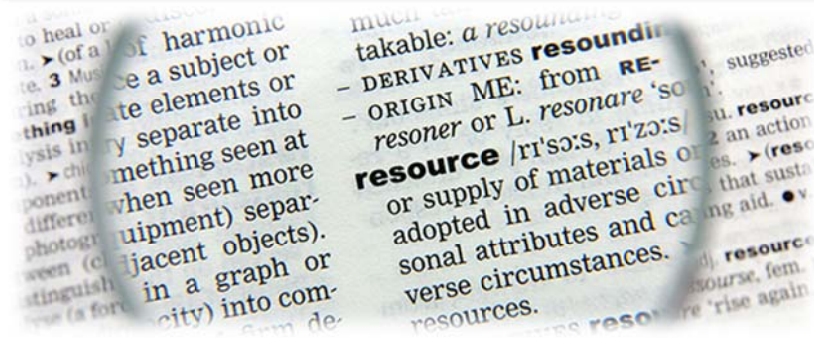
The free Northern Ireland crisis response helpline service for people who are experiencing distress or despair. No matter what your age or where you live in Northern Ireland, if you are or someone you know is in distress or despair, Lifeline is here to help.

Tel: 0808 808 8000 (People living in Northern Ireland can call Lifeline 24 hours a day and 7 days a week)

Textphone: 18001 0808 808 8000 (For deaf and hard of hearing Lifeline users)

Website: www.lifelinehelpline.info/page/lifeline-helpline

Others Resources:



Suicide Prevention websites: UK National suicide prevention resources

- 👉 **Maytree Sanctuary** – one-off short stay in a safe place
- 👉 **Mind** – for better mental health
- 👉 **Rethink** – information & support related to mental illness
- 👉 **CALM Helpline** – confidential, anonymous support for men
- 👉 **SANE Mental Health Helpline** – meeting the challenge of mental illness
- 👉 **Depression Alliance** – support & info for people with depression
- 👉 **Papyrus** – prevention of young suicide, for under 35s
- 👉 **Nightline UK** – emotional support for students in distress
- 👉 **London LGBT Switchboard** – support to LGBT communities in the UK
- 👉 **Helplines Partnership** – find a helpline for your particular need
- 👉 **Samaritans** – confidential emotional support

Online support and info: support websites, forums & information

- 👉 **UnSuicide** – online suicide help
- 👉 **About.com Depression Forum** – online forum for those coping with depression
- 👉 **Elefriends** – supportive online community
- 👉 **Big White Wall** – a peer support network
- 👉 **HelpGuide.org** – helps you to cope with suicidal thoughts
- 👉 **Childline Online Chat** – chat service for children and young people
- 👉 **The Mix** – chat service for young people
- 👉 **Reddit Suicide Watch** – moderated peer support forum
- 👉 **MindOut Online Support** – LGBT daily, out of hours, online support service
- 👉 **Metanoia** – if you are thinking about suicide, read this first
- 👉 **Live Through This** – interviews with suicide attempt survivors
- 👉 **Conversations Matter** – supporting effective community discussions

Counselling: talking to someone independent can help

- 👉 **The Counselling directory** – find a counsellor
- 👉 **RSCPP** – find a therapist service

International: resources available internationally

- 👉 **Befrienders Worldwide** – volunteer action to prevent suicide
- 👉 **IASP** – International Association for Suicide Prevention
- 👉 **Suicide Prevention Wikia** – suicideprevention.wikia.com worldwide resources

Other Apps:

- 👉 **ASK & Prevent Suicide** – educational and crisis intervention resource
- 👉 **Five Ways To Wellbeing** – set activities to improve your wellbeing (Android app only)
- 👉 **Hello, Cruel World** – 101 Alternatives to Suicide for Teens
- 👉 **Suicide Lifeguard** – for those concerned about others
- 👉 **Safety Plan** – create your own safety plan
- 👉 **Moodscope** – measure your mood daily and track progress.

Suicide Bereavement organisations:

- 👉 **CRUSE** – local and national bereavement care
- 👉 **Help Is At Hand** – NHS resource for the bereaved
- 👉 **Survivors of Bereavement** – Breaks the isolation of the bereaved
- 👉 **Alliance of Hope** – Healing and support for the bereaved
- 👉 **Winstons Wish** – The charity for bereaved children
- 👉 **Suicide Grief** – Support forum for those touched by suicide
- 👉 **The Compassionate Friends** – Organisation of bereaved parents and families
- 👉 **Child Bereavement UK** – Support for families and professional education
- 👉 **If U Care Share** – Charity promoting emotional wellbeing.
- 👉 **Facing the Future (Support Groups)** - support groups for people who have been bereaved by suicide

My Own Resources:

Insert your own here:

Stay Alive

Are you thinking about suicide?

Here are 5 suggestions to consider:

1. Wait. Decide not to do anything right now to hurt yourself. You do not have to act on your thoughts of suicide. Suicidal behaviour is an attempt to solve what feels like an overwhelming set of problems. When we are struggling to cope, our mind closes down on creativity and our problem solving skills become much more limited. Your thoughts and feelings CAN change.
2. Talk to someone, it could be a friend or family member, or a support service of some kind. There are people who want to listen and who can help you (See '[Find Help Now](#)' section).
3. If talking is difficult, there is online support (See '[Online Support](#)' in '[Resources](#)' section).
4. Try to keep yourself safe for now (See '[Staying Safe for Now](#)' section).
5. Look at other parts of this document that could be helpful: '[My Safety Plan](#)', '[Reasons for Living](#)', and '[Looking After Yourself](#)'.

My Safety Plan

If I feel I cannot stay safe from suicide, I will talk to:

I will seek help from:

I will calm myself by:

I will go to my safe place:

My ideas for keeping safe:

Reasons for living

Select reasons that are important to you:

Myself

- I care enough about myself to live
- I have the courage to face life
- I want to experience all that life has to offer
- No matter how badly I feel I know that it will not last
- I believe I can learn to adjust or cope with my problems

Family and Friends

- 🔥 It would hurt my family and friends too much and I would not want them to suffer
- 🔥 I would not want my family and friends to feel guilty afterwards
- 🔥 I have a responsibility and commitment to my family and friends
- 🔥 I love and enjoy my family and friends too much and could not leave them
- 🔥 My family and friends might believe I did not love them

Understanding my choices

- 🔥 I believe killing myself would not really accomplish or solve anything
- 🔥 I do not want to die
- 🔥 I believe I have control over my life and destiny
- 🔥 I am afraid of the actual 'act' of killing myself

Hopes and Beliefs

- 🔥 I have hope that things will improve and the future will be happier
- 🔥 I believe I can find a purpose in life, a reason to live
- 🔥 I am curious about what will happen in the future
- 🔥 Life is all we have and is better than nothing

Insert your own here:

My Lifebox: Photo section

Create a photo album of happy memories or loved ones to remind you of reasons for living e.g. your pet dog, your favourite outdoor activity, anything that connects you to life.

Staying Safe For Now

Self-help suicide prevention ideas, helping you to stay safe right now:

If you are struggling to stay safe from suicide right now, this app helps you to recognise that you have choices. As well as the choices of suicide or staying alive, [you have a third choice: stay safe for now.](#)

Below are some ideas to help you stay safe and a list of support mechanisms to go through within the app's '**Stay Alive**' section: -

- ✓ My Safety Plan
- ✓ Reasons for living
- ✓ My LifeBox
- ✓ Staying safe for now
- ✓ Self-help ideas
- ✓ Breathing exercises
- ✓ Grounding Techniques
- ✓ Looking after yourself
- ✓ Counselling

Firstly, if you haven't already and if people are struggling with thoughts of suicide, as well as reaching out to others and asking for help you/they can see the '**Find Help Now**' section, there are some ideas in there about different ways to cope with thoughts and feelings. Let someone know how bad things are and accept help.

Secondly, try to keep yourself safe from anything you might use to harm yourself or try to end your life with. This might mean removing planned methods of suicide or asking someone to help you with this. This might also mean keeping yourself away from a dangerous location. Try to make your home a safe place.

(You/ they might also want to read the page on '**Self Care**' which is about ways to look after yourself/ themselves).

The simple **'Wellness Plan'** in this app is also something they can spend some time on as a way to help themselves.

What works for one person may not work for another, and what works one day for you may not work another day. They can use these ideas to help them discover their own self-help activities.

Self Help Ideas

How to cope with your thoughts and feelings:

If you are struggling with thoughts of suicide, as well as reaching out to others and asking for help see the **'Find Help Now'** section, there are some ideas there about different ways to cope with your thoughts and feelings. You might also want to check out our page on Self Care, which is about ways to **'Looking After Yourself'**. The simple Wellness Plan in this app is also something you can spend some time on as a way to help yourself.

What works for one person may not work for another, and what works one day for you may not work another day. You can use these ideas to help you discover your own self-help activities.

Breathing Exercises

Some people find breathing exercises helpful at times, particularly if they are feeling overwhelmed. Here is an example that you might like to try: 'A Calming Breathing Exercise'

<https://youtu.be/4e3Csho8CBw>

Grounding Techniques

How to deal with anxiety, pain or emotions:

These techniques can help us deal with overwhelming anxiety, pain or emotions. Here are a few examples of ground techniques:

- 🕒 Do an activity that requires focus and attention, to help calm your mind and body
- 🕒 Think about a safe place/activity from your life, that reminds you of a time when you felt safe and calm; try to remember in your mind and body how that felt
- 🕒 Breathe slowly and steadily from your belly, as best as you can and imagine letting go of fear/pain/feeling overwhelmed as you breathe out
- 🕒 Stroke your hands over your body; be aware of the physical sensations as you do this and try to reassure and calm yourself as you do this
- 🕒 Pay attention to your senses: what can you see, hear, smell, taste or feel?
- 🕒 Move: try walking, stretching, bending and pay attention to how your body feels
- 🕒 Try holding yourself and rocking yourself, soothing yourself with words or touch
- 🕒 Use your voice: try talking/ reading aloud
- 🕒 Write down how you are feeling and what you are thinking

Some people who have thoughts of suicide have found it helpful to keep a diary of situations or events that might contribute to them thinking about suicide. Keeping track of these 'triggers' can help you to think about how to respond to them as soon as possible to try and avoid becoming suicidal. The Wellness Plan (see 'Looking After Yourself') gives you an example of how you could think about ways to deal with triggers as they come up.

If you have had thoughts of suicide in the past, or have attempted suicide in the past, it can be useful to ask yourself the question: 'What did I learn from that situation that could help me now?' Writing down your ideas about this could remind you of strengths and supports that might be valuable now.

This web page might be helpful:

- 🕒 **Lived Experience Coping Tips for Suicidal Thoughts** – www.unsuicide.wikispaces.com/Lived+Experience+Coping+Tips+for+Suicidal+Thoughts

It contains tweets from people with thoughts of suicide about what helps them cope with these thoughts

- 🕒 This is a free PDF about **living with suicidal thoughts** that you might also find useful – www.samh.org.uk/media/455329/samh_livingwithyourthoughts.pdf

Finally, you could try imagining a friend of yours is struggling with thoughts of suicide in the same way that you are. How would you try to support them? What would you say to them? How would you show them that you care? Perhaps you can show some of the same kindness and compassion towards yourself.

Looking After Yourself

Trying to take care of yourself is important whether you are thinking about suicide or worried about someone else's thoughts of suicide.

Looking after yourself can feel difficult at times but can help you to cope with difficult, painful thoughts and feelings. Consciously taking care of yourself can also help you not to get exhausted or overwhelmed and remind you that you deserve compassion and care, as we all do.

Here are some ideas about different ways you can take care of yourself. Tick any that you would like to try or that you know have helped you feel better before.

- 👉 Eat well and nourish your body
- 👉 Take some exercise that you enjoy
- 👉 Enjoy a hot shower or bath
- 👉 Try meditating (some meditations here to get you started <http://franticworld.com/free-meditations-from-mindfulness/>)
- 👉 Watch a movie or TV that you love
- 👉 Take time to read something you are interested in
- 👉 Plan an adventure of some kind, however small
- 👉 Create something with your hands
- 👉 Start a journal
- 👉 Spend some time outdoors in nature
- 👉 Go for a walk and take photos
- 👉 Cook a good meal for yourself

You might want to create a wellness plan to help you keep yourself as well as possible. Here is an example of how to create your own plan: www.wikihow.com/Create-a-Wellness-Plan

Counselling

Going to see a counsellor can be another way you can look after yourself. It can be very helpful to talk to someone independent who has skills to help you deal with your feelings and experiences.

If you want to try a counselling or a talking therapy ask your GP, who will be aware of what's available locally. Your GP can refer you for talking treatment that is free on the NHS. This will usually be a short course of counselling or CBT from the GP surgery's counselling service.

If counselling or CBT are not available at the surgery, your GP can refer you to a local counsellor or therapist for NHS treatment.

You can also find private UK counsellors here who can help you deal with suicidal thoughts, grief and other issues.

🕒 **RSCPP Find a Therapist Service** - www.rscpp.co.uk

🕒 **The Counselling Directory** - www.counselling-directory.org.uk/suicidal-thoughts.html

Myths About Suicide

Common misunderstandings and misconceptions about suicide:

Myth: Asking someone about suicide will put the idea in their head and make them more likely to kill themselves.

It is safer to ask about suicide than not to ask about suicide. Research shows that it is not dangerous to ask. If the answer is yes, the person with thoughts of suicide can be supported. If the answer is no, no harm has been done. People often find great relief in being able to openly talk about their thoughts and feelings about suicide.

Myth: Thinking about suicide means someone is mentally ill.

Many people who have thoughts of suicide have no mental illness.

Myth: Talking about suicide is attention seeking behaviour.

Anyone considering suicide needs serious attention. They are in pain and may feel hopeless. Most people who die by suicide have talked about it first: we should always take seriously anyone talking about suicide.

Myth: If someone tells a professional about their thoughts of suicide, they will be sectioned and admitted to hospital (detained under the Mental Health Act)

A section is only used when three people (an Approved Mental Health Professional or nearest relative and two doctors) agree that the person is suffering from a mental disorder and needs to be detained for assessment or treatment, either for their own safety or the safety of others. If a person with thoughts of suicide has no mental illness it is very unlikely that they will be sectioned.

Myth: Thinking about suicide is rare and unusual.

Thinking about suicide is part of being human. Anyone has the potential to have thoughts of suicide. 5% of us will consider suicide in any year. However, the vast majority of people do not act on their thoughts of suicide.

Myth: Certain groups of people are at a higher risk of suicide and we don't need to worry about people who aren't in these groups.

Anyone has the potential to have thoughts of suicide. While certain groups have a statistically higher likelihood of thinking about/dying by suicide, if we only focus on those groups we miss all the other individuals who may be struggling with thoughts of suicide.

Myth: It is weak or selfish to consider suicide.

People who attempt suicide are usually struggling with feelings of pain, despair, hopelessness, worthiness or other overwhelming feelings. They may believe that suicide is the only way out, and be unable to see beyond their intense thoughts and feelings.

Myth: Most suicides happen with no warning.

Most people who are struggling with thoughts of suicide find a way to communicate that they need help, sometimes, at an unconscious level. However, sometimes these warning signs can be missed, dismissed or avoided. It is important to be alert to potential warning signs and be prepared to ask about suicide if you're concerned for someone else. See the **'Worried about Someone'** section.

Myth: It is easy to tell if someone's thinking about suicide.

Sometimes the potential warnings signs can be very subtle. A person thinking about suicide may appear to be okay, or even cheerful. Sometimes, particularly if someone has been ill for a long

time with depression, making a decision to die by suicide can bring them some relief and their mood can appear to improve. It is important to be alert to changes in someone's behaviour, and to help someone talk about how they are feeling. If we are concerned it is important that we ask about suicide (see '**Worried about Someone – Practical Steps**' section).

Myth: Self-harm is always a sign that someone is thinking about suicide

Many people self-harm as a way of coping with difficult feelings, but are not thinking about suicide. If you are concerned that someone's self-harm may be linked to thoughts of suicide, the only way to be sure is to ask.

Myth: If someone is talking about suicide, it means they are less likely to attempt suicide.

Many people who attempt or die by suicide give verbal or no-verbal signs (see '**Worried About Someone – Potential Warning Signs**') to others beforehand. Someone talking about suicide may only just be holding onto life. Any suggestion of suicidal thoughts should always be taken seriously.

Myth: If you take your life, people (family, friends, loved ones) will be better off without you.

An attempted or completed suicide has a profound and devastating impact on people left behind. Someone considering suicide may feel that they are a burden to others around them, and be unable to recognise the effect that their death may have on loved ones.

Myth: Suicide is easy and painless.

People may perceive suicide as painless because they anticipate it will bring relief to their own unbearable mental or emotional pain. Dying by suicide is not easy. Many suicide attempts are not fatal and can leave the person with permanent damage to their body and/or brain.

Myth: If someone wants to kill themselves there is nothing that can be done to stop them.

Suicide can be a preventable death. Research tells us that most people who are suicidal are not 100% decided about dying. A part of them wants to live, and needs help to find a way to stay alive. Doubts about suicide can remain up to and including the point of dying.

Myth: Once someone has thoughts of suicide, those thoughts will always be there.

For most people feeling suicidal is an experience that lasts for a limited time. Research shows that the most intense periods of feeling suicidal will change after around 24 hours. Our thoughts and feelings can change from moment to moment, hour to hour. With help and support a person's feelings about life and suicide can change. However, some people will continue to have times in

their life when they consider suicide and extra support is needed for these people (see [‘Resources’](#), [‘Self Help’](#), [‘Wellness Plan’](#)). People who have survived suicide attempts (see view [‘Online Resources – Live Through This’](#)) have shared their stories how life changed afterwards.

Myth: If someone is suicidal it is my job to persuade them to stay alive.

The most important thing you can do is help someone to talk about their thoughts and feelings about suicide, and try to understand how they feel. You can also help them to get crisis support if they need it. You might be part of the process of helping somebody choose to stay alive but ultimately they need to do part of this work too (see [‘Find Help Now’](#)).

Myth: If some is suicidal it’s none of my business – only mental health professionals can help.

Suicide prevention is everybody’s business. Anyone can learn to support someone who is suicidal. Caring enough to get involved can make a real difference to someone’s life.

Myth: I have failed if I need to ask for help again and again.

No matter how many times you have asked for help, it’s ok to need help again and again. Reaching out and asking for help is an act of courage, not failure. The fact that you are alive now and asking for help can remind you that you have survival skills you can use again.

Myth: Depression and suicide are always linked.

Many people with depression do not think about suicide, and many people die by suicide without having depression. If you are concerned about your mental health or thoughts of suicide it can help to see a GP (family doctor). If you have depression there may be medication or counselling that could help you. Your GP can address any underlying physical health issues.

Further Information

Download a digital version of the *Stay Alive* app free on the [Apple App Store](#) or [Google Play](#)

If you have any comments or questions please contact *Grassroots* directly on: office@prevent-suicide.org.uk

Thank you for taking the time to read through the *Stay Alive* app content.