

Caring for someone who is struggling with their thoughts.

There may be times when you are looking after someone who is struggling with life and may be expressing thoughts of suicide or self-harm. Whether you are a family member or friend, when you are looking after someone in this way, it means you are what is called an unpaid carer.

Trying to keep them safe can be a frightening and lonely experience, leaving you stressed and overwhelmed. This leaflet provides some information about ways to manage the situation and the support that is available to you and your loved one.



Signs to look out for.

Speech.

Think about the language being used, do they express thoughts of hopelessness and lack of self-worth. Are they avoiding talking about the future or making any plans. Sometimes they might say things like "people will be better off without me."

Behaviour.

Is there a history of self-harm or attempts to take their own life? Do they display a lack of motivation or energy. Not showing any interest in things they normally enjoy. Isolating themselves from friends and colleagues. Sorting out personal affairs. Engaging in impulsive or risky behaviours such as using drugs and alcohol or gambling.

Feelings.

How do they present, is it different from the person you know? Are you noticing a change in how they are, for instance do they appear, depressed, anxious, irritable, tearful, angry? Sometimes a sense of calm can be an indicator that someone is at risk.

What to say and do.

Talking about suicide doesn't increase the risk, it reduces it.

Asking someone if they are thinking about harming themselves can feel intrusive and people say that they are frightened of "putting thoughts into their head" and making things worse.

It is ok to ask them directly. Research tells us that talking will not increase the risk to them, and it can be a sense of relief that somebody has noticed how they are feeling and is giving them the opportunity to talk. That act of asking shows you value them. Give that person your full attention and be sympathetic and compassionate.

- ✓ Acknowledge and recognise their feelings but try to let them know that they won't always feel that way.
 - ✓ Avoid making judgements, it is important they feel safe talking to you.
 - ✓ Think about using open questions which don't require a yes or no answer.
 - ✓ Check your understanding about what they are saying.
 - ✓ Let them know they are not alone and that you are there to support them.
 - ✓ Check with the person if they think they can keep themselves safe.
 - ✓ Encourage them to contact their GP or other professional and offer to support them with this.
 - ✓ If you are worried about them, you can contact their GP or other professional to pass on your concerns.
 - ✓ Give them information on support available. There are links on the back of this leaflet to support you with this.
 - ✓ Help them develop a safety plan. Below is a link with information on writing a safety plan and how it can support you:
- Suicide Safety Plan**
- ✓ If you think someone is at imminent risk of harming themselves contact the emergency services on 999 or call 111 press 2.



Looking after yourself.

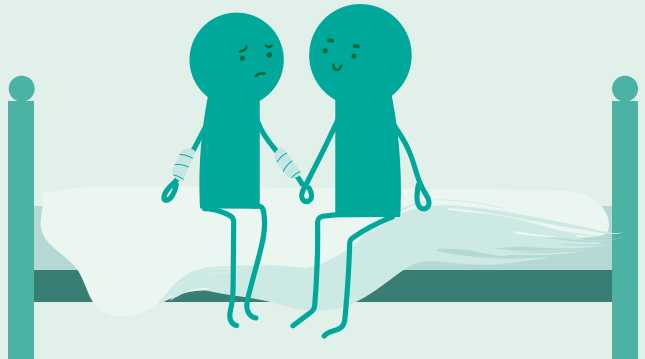
When supporting someone who is distressed it is important that you take care of yourself. This will help you deal with a difficult situation.

Speak to people involved in caring for family or friend such as GP, CPN, Psychiatrist. While they may not be able to share information with you they can listen to your concerns.

Find support for yourself, talk to a friend that you trust. You can also let your local authority know you are an unpaid carer. They can support you in having a conversation about the things that matter to you and what support is available to you. This is sometimes referred to as a Carers Assessment.

As a carer, you may be having or have had suicidal thoughts yourself. If this is the case, it is important that you seek help and support, and you can use the same information provided in this leaflet.

Contact details for organisations that can offer support for you and the person you are caring for are at the back of this leaflet.



You can also

Take time to do things you enjoy doing.



Ensure you eat a healthy diet and get plenty of rest.



If you feel like you need more information on supporting someone who has suicidal thoughts there are online courses you can access. The next page has details on where you can find additional information.

Resources

NHS Wales – 111 Press 2

If you are worried about your mental health and need urgent support, just call **111** and select option **2**.

Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Samaritans

For anonymous and confidential support, Samaritans are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Just call **116 123**.

Finding your way – a guide

Melo

Melo contains information, advice and self-help resources to help you look after your mental health and wellbeing.

www.melo.cymru

PAPYRUS

PAPYRUS is the UK charity dedicated to the prevention of suicide and the promotion of positive mental health in young people.

www.papyrus-uk.org

Carers support in your area:

Blaenau Gwent

IAA Team: 01495 315700

www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk

Monmouthshire

Monmouth/Usk/Raglan: 01600 773041

Abergavenny: 01873 735885

Chepstow/Caldicot: 01291 635666

www.monmouthshire.gov.uk

Torfaen

01495 762200

calltorfaen@torfaen.gov.uk

www.torfaen.gov.uk

Caerphilly

IAA Team: 0808 100 2500

carers@caerphilly.gov.uk

www.caerphilly.gov.uk/carers

Newport

01633 656656

info@newport.gov.uk

www.newport.gov.uk/carers

Developed by



GIG
CYMRU
NHS
WALES

Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol
Aneurin Bevan
University Health Board

In partnership with



Bwrdd Partneriaeth
Rhanbarthol Gwent
Gwent Regional
Partnership Board