LISTEN for suicide prevention

Suffolk user forum

Support us to

Change the Language Save a Life
Suicide is Not a Choice

Be the Change

Foreword:

This publication has been made possible through coproduction with service users and family carers sharing their very personal lived experiences of suicidal thoughts and bereavement by suicide.

Together we have been able to develop this supportive resource that can help others to manage their suicidal thoughts and build confidence in us all to start open conversations that help prevent suicide.

Thank you to everyone. Your time, involvement and experiences have been invaluable and will make a difference.

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LISTEN for suicide prevention

Living with suicidal thoughts

"When we feel most alone, is when we need to connect."

Many of us have suicidal thoughts at some point in our lives. These thoughts can come and go slowly, or arise very quickly, with an overwhelming need to escape what feels like an impossible situation, to stop unbearable thoughts or feelings, or to stop physical pain or long-term illness.

Sometimes we may find ourselves thinking that we just cannot carry on anymore; we cannot keep living like this. We may feel we can never find a solution to our problems, some of us may have lost everything that is important to us, and there is no hope left. We may feel we have let ourselves, our families down, and feel a failure, that everyone will be better without us. We may feel guilty about our thoughts, which can sometimes make us feel even worse.

Having these feelings and thoughts is very much part of being human when we experience more psychological or emotional pain than we can cope with.

We may find ourselves avoiding our family and friends, wanting to run away, feeling very low and unable to face the day to day things we would usually do. These feelings can sometimes feel overwhelming. They can feel as if they will never end.

When we are overwhelmed in this way it is hard to think clearly and find solutions to the challenges that life presents us. Sometimes the options we have feel unbearable and impossible to live with. These feelings often come in waves and it is important to know these feelings will lessen as the wave disappears.

Many of us who have lived through these dark times know that with time and support we can begin to manage these difficult feelings. We come to understand that these feelings will pass. Even when our options and solutions to life situations feel impossible, we can find a way through them. We can survive the most challenging experiences, and whilst it may not be easy, in fact it may be tough, we can through small steps get through it and grow our lives to be more fulfilling again.

When we feel most alone, is when we need to connect.

- Connect with ourselves, giving ourselves time and believing we are worthy of being cared about, worthy of support and help.
- Connect with others by reaching out and talking to someone we can trust.

It can be hard to talk about our feelings. We may feel able to talk to someone we know or may prefer to talk to someone more anonymously, by calling a helpline.

Connecting and sharing our worries and thoughts can help us get through these difficult times, to see our problems in a different way. It can help us to slow down our thoughts and begin to explore other solutions.

Connecting with ourselves

Giving ourselves time and keeping ourselves safe

"I will wait 24 hours and will not do anything to end my life during that time."

When these thoughts become very strong, we can give ourselves some time and distance between our thoughts and taking any immediate action. We can make a promise to ourselves, "I will wait 24 hours and will not do anything to end my life during that time."

We do not have to make a decision today. We don't need to act on our thoughts immediately. We can focus on getting through the next few minutes, the next hour, getting through today and not focus on the future. We may be able to cope more in a few days.

Thoughts and actions are two different things - our suicidal thoughts do not have to become a reality. There is no urgency to act straight away. Encouraging ourselves to wait will help to put some distance between our suicidal thoughts and any action we may try to take to end our lives.

We know that suicidal thoughts often become stronger if we use drugs or alcohol as 'self-medication'. They can also make us act more impulsively and can lead us to try to end our lives. It is really important to try not to misuse medication or to drink alcohol when we feel hopeless or are thinking about ending our life.

Keeping ourselves safe

There are things we can do to help us stay safe and to stop us from acting on impulse, especially if we experience these feelings frequently or over a period of time. If these thoughts keep coming back, we can plan to keep ourselves safe by removing things we could use to hurt ourselves, such as pills, knives, alcohol etc. If we are thinking of taking an overdose, we could give our medicines to someone we trust (who can return them to us one day at a time as we need them) until we feel more able to keep ourselves safe.

We can go to a safe place – somewhere where we can give ourselves some safe time. For some people this might be their bedroom, for others their garden, or a park. It could be friends house, or a place of spirituality or worship.

Some people do not have close family or friends and can be very alone with their thoughts and problems. They may feel that they have no one to turn to. Calling a helpline can be a supportive way to keep ourselves safe and to find the support we need.

The more we focus on our thoughts and worries, the more overwhelming they can feel. They may become stronger and harder to cope with. Distracting ourselves can feel very hard but it can really help us to slow down these thoughts and refocus on other things. We can try to focus on something we have previously enjoyed or can do something that is self-caring. Ideas that we can use include;

- Reading a book or magazine.
- Watching a favourite 'feel good' film or TV programme.
- Drawing or painting.
- Listen to music or singing.
- Play video games. Or other games or puzzles you enjoy.
- Spending time with our pets.
- Baking.
- Deciding to organise or declutter.
- Going out for a walk can really help, as long as we can do this safely and let some know if possible; just feeling the sun, the breeze or rain drops on our face could help.
- Making a list of all the positive things in our life. It might be hard to think of these things right now, but we can try. We can begin with the small things.
- Begin creating a journal. We can begin to remind ourselves of our strengths and the positive things other people have said about us. Then at the end of every day we can write down one thing we felt good about from the day. This could be something we did, or something someone did for us.

• Exercise. Sometimes just getting out and going for a walk can really help us to distract our mind. We can walk in a green space like a park, listen to nature, pay attention to the smells around us, flowers, coffee shops.
• Mindfulness can help many people. It is a way of paying attention to the present moment, to focus on our different senses.
• Breathing exercises can also help to calm the chatter in our minds, helping us to focus on the regular rhythm and flow of our breath.
• Meditation is a wellness practice that has been proven to reduce stress, improve focus, and contribute to a range of mental and physical health benefits. It can help us to relax when we feel tense, to calm and refocus our minds. There are lots of simple and easy to follow guided meditations on YouTube.

Staying Safe – making a safety plan

The Staying Safe website provides vital 'Safety Plan' guidance tools jointly funded by NHS England. It includes easy to print/online templates and guidance video tutorials designed to help people through the process of writing their own Safety Plan. A safety plan helps us to build hope, identify actions and strategies to resist suicidal thoughts and develop positive ways to cope with stress and emotional distress. Visit their website www.stayingsafe.net or visit their safety plan page at www.stayingsafe.net/ST to make your own safety plan.

The Stay Alive app

Many of these self-caring tools together with other helpful resources can be found on the Stay Alive App. We can use these resources to help keep us safe and to help focus on reminding ourselves of the positives in our lives. Sometimes, when life is hard, and we are feeling distressed and unable to cope we can forget the things that matter to us most. The Stay Alive app is a pocket suicide prevention resource with specific resources for Suffolk. It is packed with useful information to help us to cope with difficult feelings and to stay safe. We can use it if we are having thoughts of suicide or if we are concerned about someone else who may be considering suicide. In addition to the resources, the app includes a safety plan, customisable reasons for living, and a life box where you can store photos that are important to you.
For more information visit www.prevent-suicide.org.uk/find-help-now/stay-alive-app or visit the Stay Alive website www.stayalive.app.

Self-care

It is important to take care of our own mental health and wellbeing. We often put aside our own mental health and wellbeing to support others, but we also need to look after ourselves. It is OK to say no and not explain why. We are very good at telling other people how to stop, take a breath and look after themselves, but we rarely practice this ourselves.

Thrive with Five series

Suffolk User Forum have produced 'Connect' as part of the Five Ways To Wellbeing, our Thrive with Five series. Connect helps us to remember to be kind to ourselves and to build a positive and healthy sense of wellbeing, exploring connections with ourselves, others, nature, music, spirituality, faith, and learning. You can view or download Connect from our website at www.suffolkuserforum.co.uk/covid-19-support/thrive-with-five.

Connecting with people we trust

Talking to someone

If a person you know seems to be struggling, reaching out and connecting with them could save their life.

Sometimes when we feel hopeless, overwhelmed, and distressed, we shut ourselves down and avoid talking to other people. This is sometimes helpful and allows us time to process our thoughts. It can give us quiet time to rebuild our energy to cope again. But, for some of us it can lead us to focus even more our worries and fears. It can make us feel even more alone and think that no one really cares.

It can feel incredibly hard to open up to share our feelings with someone. We may think it is a sign of weakness to feel this way and tell ourselves that we should be able to cope. We may think, 'why is this happening?'. If I do not understand it myself then how can I explain it to someone else? We may feel scared and worry about what is going to happen next. Worries can include fears about losing our jobs, that our partner will leave, or friends will stop talking to us. We can worry that others may not understand us or that we may upset them. We need to remind ourselves that all these thoughts and more are normal.

The earlier we can let someone else know how we are feeling, the quicker we will be able to receive support to overcome these feelings. Whether it is a friend, a family member or someone on a help line who we do not know - telling someone else how we are feeling can help us feel less alone and more in control. Remember that, no matter what we feel, there are people who want to listen and who want to help.

We can often know naturally who we can trust and who will be most likely to listen without judging. Sometimes this will be close family members and friends. They may want to help but might not know how to do so straight away. If this happens, we can tell them what we want or need from them. This might be asking them to listen so we can talk about how we are feeling, or we may need them to help us get professional help. They may be able to offer support by just being there and helping keep us safe.

However, sometimes we do not have these close family relationships or we aware of their own worries and do not want to be a burden. Sometimes family and friends may themselves be impacting on how well we feel able to manage our feelings or problems. We can get emotional support from many other places. Many employers, especially large organisations, do offer confidential counselling for staff and increasingly workplaces are focusing on the wellbeing of their staff. You may have a colleague who might be able to listen and support you; a teacher, tutor, or religious/spiritual leader. We can call a helpline. Helplines are there to offer support, to listen and to care. It can feel really hard to pick up the phone and speak to someone we don't know. But reaching out for help and beginning to talk about how we are feeling makes a difference.

Sometimes our loved one or friend may be living with or facing a specific challenging issue.

• Living with domestic abuse (physical or emotional) frequently takes a severe toll on our self-esteem. We can begin to feel helpless and possibly even hopeless. Making that first step to talk to someone about what is happening can be hard but there are people and organisations who can help and who will listen without judgement.
The support links on our website www.suffolkuserforum.co.uk/domestic-violence-your-questions-answered provide a range of national and local specialist services who provide support for women, men and people who identify as LGBT+.

• The numbers of people experiencing financial uncertainty and loss of income are expected to rise during COVID-19. Many people will find themselves needing to access the benefits systems for the first time. Knowing where to start is the first step to taking control and planning. The Mental Health and Money advice website provides information and links to help provide support on money matters and up to date information can be found on their website www.mentalhealthandmoneyadvice.org/en/top-tips/mental-health-and-money-advice-for-covid-19-outbreak.

Connecting with our community

Support in local communities

As human beings we need social connection and interaction. Having positive relationships and social connections helps to improve our mental wellbeing.

We know that the period of lockdown has been valued by some people as an opportunity to take life more slowly and to focus on growing their wellbeing. For others, it has been a time when they have been more distant from their connections and increased their feelings of loneliness, anxiety, and depression. Others who have been living with difficult feelings and suicidal thoughts have felt more alone and have not received support in the usual way. Many voluntary and support groups have changed how they offer support and with the easing of lockdown we have been able to begin to be more connected with our communities making those vital connections again while maintaining social distancing rules.

Many of us may be very anxious about returning to what is being called the 'New Normal' and that is understandable. Social distancing rules may be subject to change and some areas of the country are being subject to local lockdowns. So there continues to be some uncertainty about what the future holds.

We may need to find support through this time. We may be able to ask a friend or a loved one to support us to leave our house until we become comfortable with it again. Others may be able to get support from peer support groups or befriending groups.

There are many benefits of leaving our house that will help improve our mental health and wellbeing. These include fresh air, exercise, connecting with nature and the realization that life has and is still going on despite what has happened.

Sharing how we are feeling with another person can help us to better understand and manage the way we feel. Some people find this easier in person talking with one person and some prefer a group setting. Whatever we decide we usually find that sharing how we feel with someone we trust has a positive result.

Talking over our feelings with someone may help us see a different perspective. It can also help us realise that we are not alone and that there is someone who is happy to listen and not judge us.

Local community groups realise the importance of human interaction and the support people give each other in a group. During lock down some groups through were able to use online video conferencing to keep people in touch with each other although not everyone has the internet. Now that lockdown has eased many groups are looking at how they can safely reopen their doors. Some groups are meeting outside in a park, for example, although this depends on the weather and so most groups are looking at other options for later in the year.

If you belong to a group why not try to make contact again and see what their plans are? Or if you would like to join a group take a look at Suffolk InfoLink and see what is going on in your area. The Infolink website www.infolink.suffolk.gov.uk/kb5/suffolk/infolink/results.action?services=2&infolinkchannel=7&sr=0&nh=10 shows what is happening at your local community centre or in your local parish.

For the latest Government guidance on COVID-19 visit www.gov.uk/coronavirus.

Connecting with someone who feels suicidal

Talking about suicidal thoughts and feelings

"Open conversations about suicidal feelings and listening are the most powerful tools we have and can save lives"

For family and friends

It can be very distressing when a loved one feels suicidal. They may have talked about wanting to end their life or we may be concerned that they are thinking about it. It may feel uncomfortable to start the conversation. We might feel unsure of what to do, or what to say. We may be worried that we will say the 'wrong' thing and be frightened of asking, 'Are you thinking of taking your own life?' These worries are all understandable and normal.

The language and words we use are very important when we are talking to someone about suicidal thoughts. We need to be understanding and empathetic. We need to be non-judgemental even when we cannot understand why someone feels as they do.

We must understand that thoughts about suicide are not about making a 'free choice'. People who have suicidal thoughts do so because they believe all other avenues in their life have been cut off. They often feel compelled toward suicide because the pain of living has become greater than their personal resources. They are losing a fight against intolerable pain, emotional turmoil, and loss of hope.
Change the Language Save a Life Suicide is Not a Choice.

Reaching out with kindness and compassion and connecting with someone in distress can make all the difference and does save lives.

It is important to choose a time and place where we can talk openly and easily without being interrupted. The most powerful gifts are our time, our compassion, and our listening.

Service users in Suffolk, who had lived experience of extreme distress and suicidal thoughts worked with mental health professionals to design LISTEN (www.nsft.nhs.uk/Get-involved/Documents/LISTEN.pdf) which is an acronym that sets emphasises the value of listening alongside the steps for supporting someone who is experiencing suicidal thoughts. Although this has been written for professionals, these steps are helpful for everyone and guide us through a conversation with our family member or friend.

L	**Listen** and validate concerns. **Look** at crisis/care plan and general options
I	**Involve** and **Inform** the service user and carer of the immediate options available
S	**Shared** understanding achieved and **Safety** issues established
T	**Time.** Be clear about your availability and be aware of your **Tone** of voice
E	**Empathise** and **Encourage** responsibility then **Evaluate** what has been agreed
N	**Next** steps made clear. **Never** end the contact without a plan

Listen and Validate

Starting the conversation - We can begin the conversation by asking, 'How are you?' Be prepared for answers such as 'fine' or 'good thanks' but follow up with 'How are you really?'. This can show that we have noticed something different about them and also shows we care about what is going on for them. We can also ask more specific questions such as, 'Is everything okay at home/work/uni?' This may help to get the conversation started but it is important we remember that there may often be more than one thing that is causing someone worry and distress. A helpful open question to ask is, 'What's going on for you right now?'

Listening to understand someone's feelings and experience is key to communicating that, 'I care, and you are not alone'. Sometimes it can feel hard to really listen as we may worry that we have to find a solution and we can spend a lot of time appearing to listen but inside we are worried about what we have to do or say next. Listening does not mean finding solutions. Just by listening we are making a difference.

Someone may speak about thoughts of ending their life or they may say things like, 'I cannot carry on anymore', 'I cannot live this life' 'I just need it all to end'. We then need to understand more about what this might mean for someone, rather than assuming that we know. We may need to ask a direct question for example 'Are you having thoughts about ending your life?' and be prepared for someone to answer 'yes', so, we can listen more with empathy and without judgement. You can do this by finding out more by asking, 'How long have you been feeling this way? And 'Have you felt this way before?'

Let them know that it's okay to talk about their feelings. Remind them that they are not alone and recognise that they have opened up to you by saying, 'Thank you for telling me' or 'I'm glad you're telling me how you feel'.

If someone has had these thoughts before, they may be able to reflect on how they coped previously and what helped them to manage these feelings.

Offering hope – It's helpful to let the person know that lots of people have thoughts of ending their life and that it's okay to talk about these feelings. Saying things like 'I know talking about this can be difficult. I'm here to listen. You can tell me anything' helps to make the conversation safe and without judgement, even if it is hard to hear what your family member or friend is saying. By saying 'I'm here, we can find a way to get through this' we can be reassuring and help them know they are not alone; that there is hope.

Understanding more - At some point in the conversation we need to understand if they have made a plan to end their life. This is important. We know that people who have made a plan are at greater risk of taking their life. It can be a hard question to ask, but the following direct questions help build a better understanding about how our family member or friend is really feeling right now.

Have you thought about how you would end your life?
Have you thought about when you would do this?
Have you made any plans?

The answers to these questions allows the conversation to discuss what we can both to do to keep them safe right now.

Involve and Inform

By talking about these difficult feelings, thoughts, and plans, we can come to a shared understanding about how safe someone is.

Often just talking through things can be helpful. It can help the peak of the wave of hopelessness to ease

Some people may begin talking about what they want to do next, others might not be ready to do so right now. We can tell them that we are here to talk whenever they ever need to and arrange a time in the near future to do something together. This can help someone feel cared about and allows the opportunity to spend time together and perhaps allow someone to talk a little more about their feelings. We can also suggest that they may consider talking to a helpline or to their GP. It can take time for some people to feel ready to talk to someone, but we can always reassure them that they are not alone.

- Our loved one or friend may feel relieved that they have begun to talk about their feelings but do not know what they can do. The key to involving and informing is to make sure the person we are supporting is safe. We can talk about a range of things that can help.
- We can offer to stay with them or to call someone they trust to stay with them until they feel safer.
- Sometimes people feel they can stay safe today, or until the morning, and we can arrange a 'check in' time and say "Okay I will call you at 9 am tomorrow to check in – can you keep yourself safe until then?".

• We can support someone by agreeing to keep anything they can hurt themselves with, by taking away medication, knives etc.
• We can talk together about the support they currently have. If they feel unsupported, we can explore options for finding support.
• This may include going online for more information, calling a helpline (see section six for both local and national helplines, many of which are 24/7) or talking to their GP.
• They may want or decide to talk to someone now and may feel able to make that contact themselves or they may find it reassuring if we can stay with them whilst they call. Or we can call the helpline or GP for them if they prefer or make the call together.

Shared Understanding

Building a shared understanding means wherever possible agreeing a safety plan together. It involves us being honest and open about how concerned we are for them and talking through the options and ways in which they can stay safe.

We can create a support plan together that sets out how they would like to be supported. This is particularly useful when someone is living with thoughts of suicide over a period of time or if these feelings come quite frequently.

It is useful to focus on what helps them in their situation. People often do know what helps them but when we are distressed or feeling hopeless, we can forget what has helped us in the past.

A safety plan and support plan can help us refocus on what might help. It is also a very useful way of keeping important information and contacts together in one place. A really useful resource for support and safety planning is the Stay Alive App: www.prevent-suicide.org.uk/find-help-now/stay-alive-app

Other helpful resources include;

• Papyrus (www.papyrus-uk.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Suicide-Safety-Plan-Template-1.pdf)
• National Mind (www.mind.org.uk/information-support/helping-someone-else/supporting-someone-who-feels-suicidal/making-a-support-plan)

Time

When talking through next steps it is important to be open and honest about the time, we have to give support. If we are giving our time to listen, this needs to be time we genuinely give, as people will be aware if our words of being here to listen and wanting to help, are delivered in a hurried way, because we are worrying about other commitments we have, such as needing to pick children up from school, or other appointments. Being distracted by our own pressures, will not help someone to talk as they may worry that they do not deserve anyone's time and concern.

Being there to support someone we care about will take time, especially if we decide to stay with them until they feel safe, or until professionals can be contacted and offer support. So, in planning next steps we need to be clear about what we can offer and what our own time constraints will be.

Empathise, Encourage and Evaluate

Listening, offering reassurance, respect and our time really does make a difference. Offering understanding and talking things through can enable someone to begin to take steps to stay safe and to get support from others. We can support and encourage them to refocus on the steps they can do by themselves.

- Thinking about understanding their warning signs; the thoughts, feelings behaviours that lead to suicidal feelings.
- Their reasons to live - what is important and what makes life worth living.
- The ways in which their environment can be made safe
- How they can plan to distract themselves
- How they can connect with other people, friends and family or support groups.
- How they can be involved in getting more professional help.

Together we can evaluate whether the plans we have discussed are going to help our friend or loved one to stay safe and whether we will need to ask for professional help.

Sometimes it may be clear that our loved one or friend is unable to keep themselves safe, or they may be at imminent risk to themselves or others. We may feel so concerned for their or others safety that we have to take the initiative.

Next Steps

Working through these stages helps us to agree what happens next and to have a clear plan that we can both follow. It is helpful as we end the conversation to confirm what we have agreed and to then follow that plan, including 'checking in' to see how they are or following up to see if they have been able to contact professionals or if they need more support.

If we are so concerned that they cannot stay safe then we need to stay with them, wherever this is possible, and get urgent professional support.

- We can call their GP surgery and ask for an emergency appointment.
- People of all ages needing urgent mental health support in Norfolk and Suffolk can call 111 and select the 'mental health option' . Help is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
- If our friend or loved one is in immediate danger of taking their own life or have seriously self-harmed, we need to call emergency services on 999, and ask for an ambulance. Calling the police can be a trigger for some people and might make the situation worse. Explain to the person that you will be calling for an ambulance. When you call 999 ask for an ambulance and explain the situation. DO NOT leave the suicidal person alone while you do this.
- Alternatively, we can take them to A&E at either Ipswich or West Suffolk hospital. We need to provide A&E staff with as much information about the situation as possible. The A&E staff are supported by a specialist mental health team called Psychiatric Liaison, which from October 2020, is a 24/7 service. These hospital teams will decide together with our friend and loved one, what needs to happen next.
- If we are so concerned that they may be a serious risk to others, we need to call 999 and ask for the police.

Importantly in next steps we need to think about how we can support ourselves. The conversation and the support we have given may have been emotionally draining and we need to look after our own wellbeing.

We can find ourselves worrying about our friend or loved one or giving them a lot of our time. To be able to care for someone else, we need to take time for ourselves too. We may find that we experience a range of different emotions. We may feel helpless, powerless, angry, sad, shocked, frightened or a whole range of other emotions unique to our own experience some of which may also present physically. It is important to know that this is okay, and that there is no right or wrong way to feel. Sometimes we worry that we are to blame if someone else feels suicidal or when our loved one doesn't feel better, but it's important not to blame ourselves.

If we have these sorts of worries it could help to talk to someone about how we are feeling. This may be our partner, friend, or other family members. Helplines are there to help us too. If we are supporting a family member living with suicidal thoughts, we can also get support from family carer organisations. In Suffolk this is Suffolk Family Carers. Information about their support can be found on thier website www.suffolkfamilycarers.org. They offer both a phone service and online chat.

Both National Mind and Rethink have published some helpful booklets on how to talk to someone who is feeling suicidal and how we can look after ourselves. Rethinks factsheet titled Suicidal thoughts How to support someone can be found by visiting www.rethink.org/advice-and-information/carers-hub/suicidal-thoughts-how-to-support-someone and the National Mind factsheet on supporting someone who is suicidal can be read at www.mind.org.uk/media-a/6144/supporting-someone-who-feels-suicidal-2020.pdf.

Local and national resources

Telephone, online and professional help

There are organisations available locally and nationally to help support our friends and loved ones. Some of these are listed below, for a more detailed list of support is available on the SUF website at ***www.suffolkuserforum.co.uk/support-directory****.*

Local support resources

Combat 2 Coffee

Support for Armed Forces veterans who may be struggling with life outside of service. To find out more visit www.combat2coffee.co.uk.

Epic Dads

Supporting Men – Empowering Fathers – Transforming Families. Visit www.epicdad.co.uk.

ISCRE

Suffolk Minority Ethnic Community Action Network is a network for and of the Black, Asian, Refugees, Gypsies, and other Minority Ethnic groups in Suffolk. Visit www.iscre.org.uk.

Kooth

Offers 11 to 25-year-olds across Norfolk and Suffolk access to online counselling delivered by qualified counsellors 365 days a year, either on a drop-in basis or through bookable chat sessions. The website also gives young people the chance to benefit from peer support and a wide range of self-help materials. For more information visit www.kooth.com.

Living Life to the Full for Adults

In just eight sessions this free online course can help you make a difference to your life. With associated downloadable worksheets, learn how to sort out your feelings when you feel low, worried, or hopeless and learn skills that tackle problems in your life. For more information visit their website at www.llttf4suffolk.com/home/living-life-to-the-full-series/llttf-adults.

NHS 111

Anyone experiencing a mental health crisis can call the Norfolk and Suffolk urgent mental health helpline and friends and family members can call on behalf of someone they're worried about. Call 111 and and select the 'mental health option' or find your local crisis line at: nhs.uk/urgentmentalhealth

Suffolk Family Carers

Helping family carers of all ages across Suffolk get the support they need to live fuller lives. Their website is www.suffolkfamilycarers.org.

Suffolk Mind

Wide range of advice and information about mental health and wellbeing. Visit their website at www.suffolkmind.org.uk.

The 12th Man

A campaign that aims to help all men talk more openly about mental health. Find out more by visiting www.12th-man.org.uk.

Victim Support

Losing a loved one to suicide is an extremely traumatic experience. Victim Supports Bereaved by Suicide Service aims to ease the distress and improve the wellbeing of those in Suffolk (excluding Waveney) who have been bereaved by suicide. They provide emotional support, practical help and signposting to other organisations. The service is free and confidential. Email Victim Support on: BBS.support@victimsupport.org.uk or call their national support line service, available 24/7 on: 08081689111

Wellbeing Suffolk

Free online courses covering low mood, stress, and resiliency. Work out why you feel as you do, how to tackle problems, build confidence, get going again, feel happier, stay calm, tackle upsetting thinking and more. The Courses are free for individuals using them in their own lives. This website is for people living in the Suffolk area, who are registered with a local GP practice. To view more information visit www.llttf4suffolk.com.

YANA

Help for those involved in farming and other rural businesses affected by stress and depression in Suffolk and Norfolk. Visit their website at www.yanahelp.org.

National support resources

Calm

Calm's mission is the to make the world happier and healthier and is the number one app for sleep, meditation and relaxation. They have many helpful ways to help you reduce your stress and anxiety levels. To view more about Calm visit their website at www.calm.com.

Child Bereavement UK

Child Bereavement UK helps children and young people (up to age 25), parents, and families, to rebuild their lives when a child grieves or when a child dies. For their website visit www.childbereavementuk.org and to see their support section after a sudden death visit www.childbereavementuk.org/sudden-death-including-accidents-suicide-and-homicide.

Combat Stress

For over a century Combat Stress been helping former servicemen and women deal with issues like post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety and depression. Today they provide specialist treatment and support for veterans from every service and conflict, focusing on those with complex mental health issues. Their website is www.combatstress.org.uk.

Mental Health and Money Advice

Mental Health & Money Advice is the first UK-wide online advice service designed to help you understand, manage, and improve your financial and mental health. They are here for anyone with a mental illness who is struggling with, money, as well as anyone whose financial problems are affecting their mental health.
Their website is www.mentalhealthandmoneyadvice.org/en.

MIND

Wide range of advice and information about mental health and wellbeing.
Visit www.mind.org.uk for more.

Money and Mental Health Policy Institute

People with mental health problems are three and a half times as likely to be in problem debt. Money and Mental Health is an independent charity, committed to breaking the link between financial difficulty and mental health problems. More information can be found on their website at www.moneyandmentalhealth.org.

National Suicide Prevention Alliance

The National Suicide Prevention Alliance (NSPA) is an alliance of public, private and voluntary organisations in England who care about suicide prevention and are willing to take individual and collective action to reduce suicide and support those bereaved or affected by suicide.
For more information visit www.nspa.org.uk.

Recovery College Online

Providing a range of online educational courses and resources to people with experience of mental illness, from service users to their family, friends, and staff. Their webiste is www.recoverycollegeonline.co.uk.

Papyrus
They provide confidential support and advice to young people struggling with thoughts of suicide, and anyone worried about a young person through their helpline, HOPELINEUK. More information about Papyrus and their helpline can be found on their website at www.papyrus-uk.org.

Sane
Sane believe that no-one affected by mental illness should face crisis, distress or despair completely alone. They offer various types of support and resources and run their own community to support people who may be struggling. Visit their website at www.sane.org.uk.

Samaritans
Whatever you are going through, a Samaritan will face it with you. They are there 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Telephone 116 123.

Shelter UK
No-one needs to face bad housing or homelessness alone. Last year over 5 million people turned to Shelter for advice. Visit their website at www.england.shelter.org.uk.

SHOUT
24/7 text service, free on all major mobile networks, for anyone in crisis anytime, anywhere. It is a place to go if you're struggling to cope and you need immediate help. Text 85258.

Stay Alive App
The Stay Alive app is a pocket suicide prevention resource for the UK, packed full of useful information to help you stay safe. You can use it if you are having thoughts of suicide or if you are concerned about someone else who may be considering suicide.
Their website is www.prevent-suicide.org.uk/find-help-now/stay-alive-app and the link to the online app is www.stayalive.app.

Support for NHS Staff
A range of support offers to suit a range of different needs. More information can be found at www.people.nhs.uk/help.

Switchboard LGBT+
Switchboard provide an information, support and referral service for lesbians, gay men and bisexual and trans people – and anyone considering issues around their sexuality and/or gender identity. Information and can be found on their website at www.switchboard.lgbt.

Zero Suicide Alliance
The Zero Suicide Alliance is a collaborative of National Health Service trusts, businesses and individuals who are committed to suicide prevention in the UK and beyond. For their website, visit www.zerosuicidealliance.com.

How can I get involved with suicide prevention?

You can help change happen

Be the change and together we can save lives.

Support the Suffolk Suicide Prevention Strategy

SUF has been asked to coproduce a refresh of the Suffolk Suicide Prevention Strategy and are working with Service Users, Family Carers and professionals discussing what more is needed, what is missing, and what can be improved in Suffolk for Suicide Prevention.

If you would like to be involved, please email hello@suffolkuserforum.co.uk or call the SUF office on 01473 907087 to have a friendly chat.

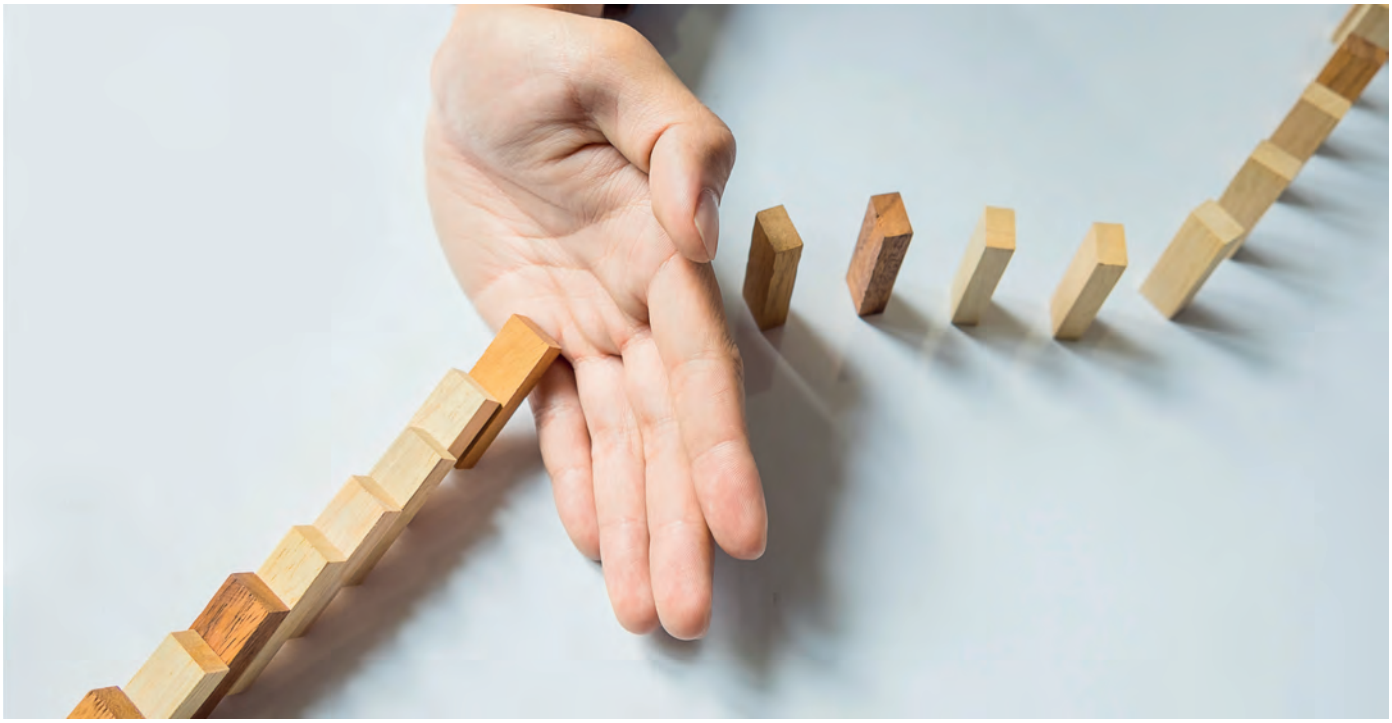
If you would like to look at what we have achieved so far with the current Suffolk Suicide Prevention Strategy, please visit the Suffolk Lives Matter website www.healthysuffolk.org.uk/projects/suffolk-lives-matter.

Your Suffolk Life Saver pledge

Pledge your support to to tackle the stigma associated with suicide and raise awareness about support available. Information is available to view online at: www.healthysuffolk.org.uk/projects/suffolk-lives-matter/your-suffolk-life-saver-pledge. Suffolk Life Savers are asking as many people as possible in Suffolk to support us to raise awareness of the support available and to tackle the stigma associated with suicide.

Support us

Change the Language Save a Life Suicide is Not a Choice



Be the change that is needed

Service users have still been reporting to us that some professionals have told them that death by suicide is 'their choice'. We are asking everyone to change the language when talking with people who are living with suicidal feelings or when people have died by suicide. We are asking people to understand thoughts or death by suicide is not about making a 'free choice'. People who have suicidal thoughts do so because they believe all other avenues in their life have been cut off. They often feel compelled toward suicide, because, simply, the pain of living has become greater than their personal resources. They are losing a fight against intolerable pain, emotional turmoil, and loss of hope. **Be the change and together we can save lives**.

Share your experiences of receiving help and support for suicide prevention and support us to share peoples anonymised experiences as feedback, to help inform suicide prevention and improvements in services.

Tell us about your experiences of mental health and the support that you have recently received. This could be care and support from your GP, link worker, midwife, psychiatrist, community psychiatric nurse, social worker, employer, the Access and Assessment Team, A&E and Integrated Delivery Teams in Norfolk and Suffolk Foundation Trust. It could also be about the care and support you have received from local charities and organisations, such as local peer groups, care farms.
Visit www.suffolkuserforum.co.uk/your-feedback to leave feedback via our website or call the SUF office on 01473 907087 and talk to us.

Suffolk user forum

your voice for emotional and mental health

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Suffolk User Forum

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