

Suicide

Suicidal behaviour exists along a continuum from thinking about ending ones' life (suicidal ideation), to developing plan, to non-fatal suicidal behaviour (suicide attempt), to ending ones' life (completing suicide).

“Suicide is not chosen; it happens when pain exceeds resources for coping with pain.”

9% of 16-24 year olds have attempted suicide in their lifetime

Young people in prison are 18 times more likely to take their own lives (The Lancet 2005).

Possible warning signs – expressions of hopelessness or helplessness, an overwhelming sense of shame or guilt, a dramatic change in personality or appearance, changed habits, a drop in performance, a lack of interest in the future, written or spoken notice of intention to end life, putting affairs in order, sudden unexplained 'recovery', use of suicide chat rooms.

If you are concerned about a cadet then you should follow the Safeguarding Referral Process and speak with the unit or force safeguarding lead. A risk assessment should also consider the fact that a young person has previously attempted suicide and put in place mitigations for it happening again and guidance for what action should be taken where it to happen again.

For more information please contact the [National Safeguarding Manger](#) who is also a trainer in youth mental health first aid and will be able to provide more guidance and information.

If there is an immediate concern then it is important that leaders do not

- Panic or try quick solutions;
- Dismiss what the child or young person says;
- Believe that a young person who has threatened to harm themselves in the past will not carry it out in the future;
- Disempower the child or young person;
- Ignore or dismiss the feelings or behaviour;
- See it as attention seeking or manipulative;
- Trust appearances, as many children and young people learn to cover up their distress.

Leaders should try and ascertain what has helped the individual feel better in the past, whilst seeking urgent assistance from professionals such as police, ambulance or even trusted family members.

Useful Resources

Samaritans: www.samaritans.org
Charlie Walker Memorial Trust: www.cwmt.org.uk
Stamp Out Suicide: www.stampoutsuicide.org.uk
PAPYRUS: www.papyrus-uk.org

Useful Apps

Stay Alive: Free app that offers help and support to people with thoughts of suicide and people concerned about someone else.