

# MYTHS ABOUT SUICIDE

Understanding the facts about suicide will help you identify the signs if someone close to you is finding it hard to cope.



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

**Fact:** Most people have thought of suicide from time to time and not all people who die by suicide have mental health problems at the time of death. However, many people who kill themselves do suffer with their mental health, typically to a serious degree. Sometimes it's known about before the person's death and sometimes not.

**Myth:** People who talk about suicide aren't serious and won't go through with it.

**Fact:** People who kill themselves have often told someone that they do not feel life is worth living or that they have no future. Some may have actually said they want to die. While it's possible that someone might talk about suicide as a way of getting the attention they need, it's vitally important to take anybody who talks about feeling suicidal seriously.



The majority of people who feel suicidal do not actually want to die; they do not want to live the life they have.



**Myth:** Once a person has made a serious suicide attempt, that person is unlikely to make another.

**Fact:** People who have tried to end their lives before are significantly more likely to eventually die by suicide than the rest of the population.

**Myth:** If a person is serious about killing themselves then there is nothing you can do.

**Fact:** Often, feeling actively suicidal is temporary, even if someone has been feeling low, anxious or struggling to cope for a long period of time. This is why getting the right kind of support at the right time is so important.

**Myth:** Talking about suicide is a bad idea as it may give someone the idea to try it.

**Fact:** Suicide can be a taboo topic in society. Often, people feeling suicidal don't want to worry or burden anyone with how they feel and so they don't discuss it. By asking directly about suicide you give them permission to tell you how they feel. People who have felt suicidal will often say what a huge relief it is to be able to talk about what their experiencing. Once someone starts talking they've got a better chance of discovering other options to suicide.

**Myth:** Most suicides happen in the winter months.

**Fact:** Suicide is more common in the spring and summer months.

**Myth:** People who threaten suicide are just attention seeking and shouldn't be taken seriously.

**Fact:** People who threaten suicide should always be taken seriously. It may well be that they want attention in the sense of calling out for help, and giving them this attention may save their life.

**Myth:** People who are suicidal want to die.

**Fact:** The majority of people who feel suicidal do not actually want to die; they do not want to live the life they have. The distinction may seem small but is in fact very important and is why talking through other options at the right time is so vital.

## About Samaritans

## Talk to us



"They are there when all your friends are asleep and you are alone in the world, full of thoughts."

Talk to us any time you like, in your own way, and off the record – about whatever's getting to you.

You don't have to be suicidal.



CONTACT US NOW

If you're concerned about suicidal thoughts, you can contact us anytime. We'll help you sort through your feelings, talk through your options and, hopefully, find a way forward.

You don't have to give your name, and you can talk for as long as you like.

To talk to us straight away, call 116 123. Emails take a bit longer to reply to, but sometimes it helps to try and write things down first. Email [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org).

[Other ways to contact us](#)

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People talk to us anytime they like, in their own way - about whatever's getting to them. You don't have to be suicidal.

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