**Let’s Talk: Suicidal thoughts and feelings**

**Secondary +**

This resource is part of our self-care suite of resources and has been co-produced with children and young people living in Essex, for children and young people. They have also been developed and quality assured by the following stakeholders:

* Essex Educational Psychology Service
* Health Watch Essex
* Essex Mental Health Support Teams (MHSTs) NELFT NHS Foundation Trust
* Essex Multi-schools Council
* Essex Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) strategy team
* Essex Child and Family Wellbeing Service, HCRG Care Group in partnership with Barnardos
* NELFT NHS Trust Southend, Essex, and Thurrock (SET) Child, Adolescent and Mental Health Service (CAMHS)
* Professionals in schools and settings can access all these resources via the [Essex info link SEMH portal](https://schools.essex.gov.uk/pupils/social_emotional_mental_health_portal_for_schools/Pages/Self-care-for-CYP-Library.aspx). Children and young people (CYP), parents/carers and professionals can also access these resources via the SET CAMHS website. Our self-care content can also be accessed via SET CAMHS Instagram account:

The resources are intended to be accessed by CYP independently or trusted adults use these resources with CYP through 1:1 conversation, whole school/group discussion and assemblies.

Please note: some of the content within our self-care resources may be emotive for CYP. We recommend that you make use of the ‘signposting to support’ section of this document should any of the content be triggering.

   

 

**Introduction**

Suicidal feelings or thoughts are sometimes referred to as suicidal ideation. These terms are both ways to describe the feelings and thoughts that someone can have about the possibility of ending their life.

If you are having suicidal thoughts, feelings or ideation, there is hope for you, and you can get through this.



**Facts**

* It is estimated that one in four young people experience suicidal thoughts at some point.
* There are lots of ways of dealing with these feelings and overcoming them.
* Anyone can feel suicidal for any reason. What causes one person to feel suicidal may not have the same effect on someone else.
* Suicidal feelings can build up over time, or they can begin suddenly.
* Research shows that self-harming is not necessarily a sign of feeling suicidal.
* Some warning signs of having suicidal thoughts and feelings might include:
* deep depression and sadness
* loss of interest in things you normally enjoy and things in daily life
* trouble sleeping
* feeling hopeless or worthless
* feeling angry about your life

**Myth Buster**

* Suicidal thoughts and feelings only happen when you already self-harm X
* Suicidal thoughts and feelings don’t happen to people very often X
* There is nothing you can do to feel ok again X
* Having suicidal thoughts and feelings means you will take your own life X
* You should not talk about your suicidal thoughts and feelings with anyone in school or at home X

**Video clips**

*Check out these videos about suicidal thoughts and feelings*

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| * [Just ask](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PwL--ZIPD68)   Stop suicide animation |
| * [Sinking feeling](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dKU1OLrvOn4&t=7s)   Papyrus suicide awareness video |
| * [Coping with suicidal feelings](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vFJeRUgqT9Y)   Childline’s animation talking about suicidal feelings |

**Resources**

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| * [The Samaritans – practical ways to help yourself cope with suicidal thoughts and feelings](https://www.samaritans.org/how-we-can-help/if-youre-having-difficult-time/signs-you-may-be-struggling-cope/practical-ways-help-yourself-cope/)   Information on what to do if you are feeling low or struggling to cope. |
| * [Coping with suicidal thoughts | Support for suicide | The Mix](https://www.themix.org.uk/mental-health/suicide/a-letter-to-myself-and-to-anyone-struggling-with-suicidal-thoughts-47353.html)   The Mix – letter to myself and to anyone struggling with suicidal thoughts |
| * [Help with suicidal thoughts](https://www.bekindtomymind.co.uk/resourcesfor/suicidal-thoughts/)   Bekindtoyourmind have produced some resources to help with suicidal thoughts |
| * [Suicide support for children and young people with Autism](https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/topics/mental-health/suicide)   National Autistic Society have created some advice for children and young people with Autism in relation to suicide |
| * [Your online mental wellbeing community](https://www.kooth.com/)   Kooth.com offers free, safe, and anonymous support |
| * [Papyrus prevention of young suicide](https://www.papyrus-uk.org/)   Support for children and young people to reduce the risk of suicide |
| * [Media literacy and mental health training](https://stem4.org.uk/?gclid=EAIaIQobChMIyZbev-uTggMVB9_tCh2Phwb6EAAYBCAAEgLuhPD_BwE)   Stem4 supporting teenage mental health |
| You may also find it helpful to look through the following:   * Create a [Safety Plan](http://www.papyrus-uk.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Suicide-Safety-Plan-Template-1.pdf) * Create a [Self-Soothe box](http://www.papyrus-uk.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Hope-box.pdf) * Take a look at the Samaritans [Self-Help App](http://selfhelp.samaritans.org/) * Download the [“Stay Alive” App](http://prevent-suicide.org.uk/find-help-now/stay-alive-app/) |

**Reflective questions**

(Try exploring these reflective questions with a CYP)

* What do you think ‘suicidal thoughts and feelings might mean?
* How would you know if you were having these feelings or thoughts?
* What kind of thoughts and feelings have you been having?
* What can you do to feel better?
* What would you like to do to feel better?
* What advice would you give to a friend if they were having these thoughts and feelings?

**Quiz**

Once you’ve gone through this resource with a CYP try this quiz questions with them:

* What does ‘suicidal thoughts and feelings’ mean?
* What things are true and not true about this?
* What are some things you can do to feel ok again?
* Who can you talk to about this?
* How can someone else help you?





**Additional ideas**

Other things to try:

Apps for young people:

**For Me** – free app from Childline, offering counselling, group message boards and advice. Calm Harm – free app providing a range of techniques to relieve emotional distress and particularly helpful for individuals who self-injure.

**Clear Fear** – free app to help with managing anxiety.

**MindShift** - free app with advice managing anxiety and relaxation methods.

**SAM** (Self-help for Anxiety Management) - has games and tools to help you understand and manage anxiety.

**distrACT** - is a free app that provides help around self-harm and suicidal thoughts.

**Combined Minds** - Combined Minds uses a ‘Strengths-Based’ Approach which has been shown to be effective in recovery and builds on resourcefulness and resilience.

**Headspace** – Relax with guided meditations and mindfulness techniques that bring calm, wellness, and balance to your life in just a few minutes a day.

**Stay Alive -** suicide prevention resource for the UK, packed full of useful information and tools to help you stay safe in crisis. The app links you directly to local and national crisis resources, so you won’t need to carry around slips of paper with contact details on – it’s all stored there within the app. If the resource isn’t listed, simply add in your own.

**WYSA**: An ‘emotionally intelligent’ penguin that learns to react to the emotions you express. Overtime it gets to know you better and proactively reaches out to help you.

**Cove:** With Cove, you can capture your mood or express how you feel by making music and storing it in a personal journal.

**Mend**: The number one breakup app, is a self-care app for heartbreak. It guides you through your breakup day by day (free for 7 days).

**Stop, Breathe and Think**: A friendly app to guide people through meditations for mindfulness and compassion.

**Smiling Mind:** A non-profit web and app based meditation programme developed by psychologists and educators to help bring mindfulness into your life.

**Signposting to Support**

For additional support we recommend that trusted adults use these resources to support children and young people access support when required:

* [Where to get urgent mental health support from: Advice from NHS](https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/mental-health-services/where-to-get-urgent-help-for-mental-health/)
* [Hopeline 0800 068 41 41](https://www.papyrus-uk.org/?gclid=Cj0KCQiAr8eqBhD3ARIsAIe-buPX2wxJnAgwWhiwGGy_R_USTlZ9o6tbE_3RlcOYnLbbF0TA4jIO0B4aAkHmEALw_wcB)
* Text ‘SHOUT’ to 85258 (available 24/7)
* [Kooth.com](https://www.kooth.com/) (Age 11-25)
* [Togetherall](https://togetherall.com/en-gb/faqs/becoming-a-member-and-managing-your-profile/#:~:text=Togetherall%20is%20only%20for%20adults,is%20only%20available%20to%2018%2B.) (age 16+)
* [Getting help for your child: where to start](https://www.youngminds.org.uk/parent/parents-a-z-mental-health-guide/getting-help-for-your-child/)
* [Childline](https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/your-feelings/mental-health/?&&&&gclsrc=aw.ds&&gclid=EAIaIQobChMIqryktIeP_wIVicPtCh3QZQs6EAAYASAAEgJr5vD_BwE&gclsrc=aw.ds) 0800 1111 when [contacting ChildLine what to expect](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_KNtMOKwTco)?
* [NHS 111](https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/mental-health-services/)
* [Southend, Essex & Thurrock Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service (SET CAMHS)](https://www.nelft.nhs.uk/set-camhs/)
* [Explore counselling/therapy](https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/talking-therapies-medicine-treatments/talking-therapies-and-counselling/counselling/)



* SET CAMHS Instagram account

**How to help a friend**

* Share this resource with them
* Tell them about the SET CAMHS Instagram account
* Talk to them about the resources, links, and apps above
* Listen to them and help them to find positive coping strategies
* Talk about who can help them and who they can talk to (an adult at home or at school) about their feelings
* If you are really concerned about someone, find a trusted adult you can speak to for advice.

**The adult box** (for professionals and parent/carers to read)

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| * [At home safety guide for self-harm or suicide](https://www.nationwidechildrens.org/family-resources-education/health-wellness-and-safety-resources/helping-hands/children-at-risk-for-self-harm-or-harm-to-others-home-safety-guidelines-for-families)   Nationwide Children’s guidance for ways to support your child at this time. This includes writing a safety plan and assessing the safety of your home environment(s). Keep having discussions about your child’s safety with their doctor or health care providers. |
| * [Worried about my child’s mental health](https://www.england.nhs.uk/blog/advice-for-parents-guardians-and-carers-on-how-to-support-a-child-or-young-person-if-youre-concerned-about-their-mental-health/)   NHS England’s advice for parents/carers on how to support a child or young person. |
| * [A guide for parents/carers about suicidal thoughts](https://www.youngminds.org.uk/parent/parents-a-z-mental-health-guide/suicidal-thoughts/)   Young minds guide for parents and carers to support a child or young person manage suicidal thoughts and feelings |
| * [Essex ‘Let’s Talk reducing the risk of suicide’ guidance](https://schools.essex.gov.uk/pupils/social_emotional_mental_health_portal_for_schools/Documents/Let's%20Talk%20-%20reducing%20the%20risk%20of%20suicide%20-%20February%202021.pdf#search=let%27s%20talk%20reducing%20the%20risk%20of%20suicide)   Promoting positive emotional wellbeing and reducing the risk of suicidal thoughts and actions in children and young people. I guide for schools and settings. |
| * [Suicidal feelings and thoughts](https://mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk/mental-health-needs/suicidal-feelings-and-thoughts/)   Mentally healthy schools support for school staff |
| * [My child is having suicidal thoughts](https://parents.actionforchildren.org.uk/mental-health-wellbeing/low-mood-depression/my-child-is-having-suicidal-thoughts/)   Action for children’s advice for parents/carers about supporting their child through suicidal thoughts and feelings |
| * [Building suicidal safer schools and colleges](https://www.papyrus-uk.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/toolkitfinal.pdf)   Papyrus guidance on supporting a whole school approach in developing suicide-safer learning environments |
| * [CAMHS resources](https://www.camhs-resources.co.uk/websites)   This is a collection of websites that provide information and support to young people and families. If you click on the image it will open the website in a new window. Most of the sites are free though some have paid components to them to access added resources and support. |

   

 