

Suicide Help

Dealing with Suicidal Thoughts & Feelings

You're not alone; many of us have had suicidal thoughts at some point in our lives. Feeling suicidal is not a character defect, and it doesn't mean that you are crazy, or weak, or flawed. It only means that you have more pain than you can cope with **right now**. This pain seems overwhelming and permanent at the moment. But with time and support, you can overcome your problems and the pain and suicidal feelings will pass.

Coping with suicidal thoughts: the first steps

Step #1: Promise not to do anything right now

Even though you're in a lot of pain right now, give yourself some distance between thoughts and action. Make a promise to yourself: "I will wait 24 hours and won't do anything drastic during that time." Or, wait a week.

Thoughts and actions are two different things—your suicidal thoughts do not have to become a reality. There's no deadline, no one pushing you to act on these thoughts immediately. Wait. Wait and put some distance between your suicidal thoughts and suicidal action.

Step #2: Avoid drugs and alcohol

Suicidal thoughts can become even stronger if you have taken drugs or alcohol. It is important to not use nonprescription drugs or alcohol when you feel hopeless or are thinking about suicide.

Step #3: Make your home safe

Remove things you could use to hurt yourself, such as pills, knives, razors, or firearms. If you are unable to do so, go to a place where you can feel safe. If you are thinking of taking an overdose, give your medicines to someone who can return them to you one day at a time as you need them.

Step #4: Take hope – people DO get through this

Even people who feel as badly as you are feeling now manage to survive these feelings. Take hope in this. There is a very good chance that you are going to live through these feelings, no matter how much self-loathing, hopelessness, or isolation you are currently experiencing. Just give yourself the time needed and don't try to go it alone.

Step #5: Don't keep these suicidal feelings to yourself

Many of us have found that the first step to coping with suicidal thoughts and feelings is to share them with someone we trust. It may be a friend, a therapist, a member of the clergy, a teacher, a family doctor, a coach, or an experienced counselor at the end of a helpline. Find someone you trust and let them know how bad things are. Don't let fear, shame, or embarrassment prevent you from seeking help. Just talking about how you got to this point in your life can release a lot of the pressure that's building up and help you find a way to cope.

Why do I feel this way?

Many kinds of emotional pain can lead to thoughts of suicide. The reasons for this pain are unique to each one of us, and our ability to cope with the pain differs from person to person. Don't listen to anyone who tells you, "That's not enough to be suicidal about." We are all different. What might be bearable to one person may not be bearable to you. There are, however, some common factors that may lead us to experience suicidal thoughts and feelings.

Feeling suicidal is often associated with problems that can be treated

Loss, depression, anxiety disorders, medical conditions, drug and alcohol dependency, financial, legal or school problems, and other life difficulties can all create profound emotional distress. They also interfere with our ability to problem solve. Even if you can't see it now, there are nearly always other solutions for these problems.

Mental health conditions such as [depression](#), [anxiety](#), and [bipolar disorder](#) are all treatable with changes in lifestyle, therapy, and medication. Most people who seek help for their problems and make constructive changes in their lives improve their situation and recover. Even if you have received treatment for a disorder before, or if you've already made attempts to solve your problems, you should know that it's often necessary to try several different solutions before the right solution or combination of solutions can be found. Almost all problems can be treated or resolved.

Why suicide can seem like the only option

If you are unable to think of solutions other than suicide, it is not that other solutions don't exist, but rather that you are currently unable to see them. The intense emotional pain that you're experiencing right now can distort your thinking so it becomes harder to see possible solutions to problems, or to connect with those who can offer support. Therapists, counselors, or friends or loved ones, can help you to see solutions that otherwise may not be apparent to you. Give them a chance to help.

A suicidal crisis is almost always temporary

Although it might seem as if your pain and unhappiness will never end, it is important to realize that crises are usually temporary. Solutions are often found, feelings change, unexpected positive events occur. Remember: suicide is a permanent solution to a temporary problem. Give yourself the time necessary for things to change and the pain to subside.

Reaching out for help.

Reach out to someone. Do it now. If you promised yourself 24-hours or a week in step #1, use that time to tell someone what's going on with you. You can call a trusted friend, family member, minister, rabbi, doctor, or therapist. It doesn't matter who it is, as long as it's someone you trust and who is likely to listen with compassion and acceptance.

If you don't know who to turn to:

In the U.S. – Call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255) or the National Hopeline Network at 1-800-SUICIDE (1-800-784-2433). These toll-free crisis hotlines offer 24-hour suicide prevention and support. Your call is free and confidential.