

# Suicide

<http://www.myfishbites.com/assemblies-suicide.php>

## Suicide

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This is an assembly on a very sensitive subject – suicide – people taking their own lives intentionally.

At a recent conference working with young people, there were two issues that came up: addiction to things like porn and suicide (and depression).

Suicide is something that many young people and even older people (especially guys) struggle with. It's very real. But know that even when you feel despair, there is always hope and there is always a way through.

As a Christian, I want you to know that you really matter – you matter to God, to friends, to family and you matter even to me!

*The famous speaker called Billy Graham said this: "No matter how hard life has gotten, I know that with God there is hope."*

Before we go any further, I want you to know what Christians believe that God says and to believe it.

## Facts about suicide in the UK

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- 5,965 people committed suicide in 2016.
- Male suicides are around 3 times higher than female suicides in the UK.
- Suicide is the leading cause of death among men aged 20–34 in the UK.
- Suicide kills three times as many people as road traffic accidents.

The risk factors known to increase likelihood of suicide generally include:

- mental health issues
- drug and alcohol misuse
- history of trauma or abuse
- unemployment
- social isolation
- poverty
- poor social conditions
- imprisonment
- violence
- family breakdown

Facts from [The Samaritans](#), [Mental Health Foundation](#), the [Office of National Statistics](#) (accessed 17 August 2018).

## Among young people:

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A report looking at data from January 2014 – April 2015 found that there were 145 suicides among young people aged 10–19.

Ten common themes found among young people who had committed suicide:

- family factors such as mental illness
- abuse and neglect
- bereavement and experience of suicide
- bullying
- suicide-related internet use
- academic pressures, especially related to exams
- have social impact
- alcohol and illicit drugs
- social isolation or withdrawal
- physical health conditions that may
- mental ill health, self-harm and suicidal ideas

When looking at those who had committed suicide, certain common factors were found:

- Previous self-harm
- Self harm from cutting
- Suicidal ideas
- Any diagnosis of mental illness
- No diagnosis of mental illness
- Contact with child and adolescent mental health services
- Contact with youth justice / police
- No contact with mental health services

According to the study: "Numerous experiences and stresses contribute to suicide - it is rarely caused by one thing... For many, longstanding family adversity seems to have been followed by difficulties in other areas of life, and complicated by mental health problems. This pattern of cumulative risk may then lead to a "final straw" event, often a broken relationship or exam stress."

[University of Manchester / NCISH report](#) (accessed 17 August 2018).

## What If I Feel Suicidal?

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*Remember that it's OK to ask for help. We all need support in life and we all have ups and downs.*

If you are struggling with depression or negative thoughts, it's not because you are 'weak'. Not at all.

You need to remember that your feelings change. What you 'feel' isn't the full truth about yourself. Feelings are good but they change all the time, often randomly, so don't be led by your feelings.

And especially for the guys – it's good to talk to someone you trust. Your feelings are (in the words of Shrek) "better out than in" !! There's a saying that "a problem shared is a problem halved." It just means when you talk to someone, it's like releasing it so that it's not so big as before.

If you're feeling very depressed or suicidal, as hard as it may seem you need to get around other people. Don't shut yourself away. Try to get out and see some people.

Remember to take one day at a time. The Bible says that we shouldn't worry about the future all the time. We get through one day at a time. Things won't always stay the same. There is always a hope and a future.

Try to stay away from negative influences – online, drugs, alcohol and others who think the same who may drag you down.

Another way you can help yourself is to help others. When you help others, it gives you value and lifts you out from just getting stuck inside your own head.

## Hope

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Everybody wants to feel loved, to feel accepted and to know that they are valued and have a part to play in life and society. Many people just haven't been told these things or events have happened that cause people to doubt their value and worth. Sometimes people who commit suicide think they are doing others a favour by not having to live with them any more. This is not true. You will be missed and you won't help other people – friends and family left behind have great difficulty coping with the loss. You can help them by helping yourself and help yourself by helping them.

One of the greatest messages to individuals is that you are valuable and that you are worth it.

## How Can I Help?

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*According to research, one way that friends can help someone thinking of committing suicide is to say: 'Are you thinking of committing suicide?' This often stops a person from taking their own life.*

If we look at some of the things that are factors in suicides, we can think about some of the ways which we can help. But first of all we have to recognise that every life is valuable and worthwhile.

*As a Christian I believe that you are no accident and that you are made in the image of a loving God who is a good father and has a good plan for your life.*

But if we look at the things that are triggers for people, we can think about how we can step in before small things become big things.

- Look and see if certain people seem withdrawn and distant especially if they're not normally this way. Can you contact them or ask how they are? Invite them to something with you? Include them in social groups.
- If someone has gone through a bereavement or loss in their family, or there has been a family break up, maybe you could offer that person extra support or a listening ear.
- If you suspect someone has gone through any kind of abuse or neglect, or is struggling with addictions you could report it to the right person in your school or place of learning. And you can be there for that person as much as you can or get others to help.
- If someone is being bullied, you can step in to help or you can let someone know, even doing so on the quiet if you need to. If there is stuff on social media that is hurtful or hateful, let someone know. Don't join in with any abuse.
- If someone has a lot of pressure on them with exams, encourage them to get help / help them out / point it out to a teacher or mentor or TA.
- One thing that can cause depression and worse is pressures around social media - <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-42705881> - so maybe have times you get away from social media and build real-life friendships that can help you get through tough times.

## **Samaritans Video - small talk saves lives**

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YouTube link – <https://youtu.be/KiynAdEuyWQ>

## **Other Practical Ways To Help**

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One girl in Sunderland pinned messages of hope on paper to a bridge in Sunderland which is a suicide hotspot in the area. Her messages say things like "You're Not Alone" and "This isn't how it ends" and putting the number for the Samaritans on the paper. [Click for Link to ITV news report.](#) A similar thing was done by three girls in Newton Abbot in Devon after two suicides in the area.

*Is there something you could do practically to help others, even those you don't know?*

One expert in the USA called Karen Mason said this about prevention of suicide among young people:

"One approach is through a Hope Kit, which can be a shoebox or a memo in a phone that reminds the person of their reasons to live, like wanting to go to college or get married. It's important also to help youth avoid alcohol and drugs—about half of youth suicide involves alcohol intoxication."

## **Resources – the little book of Chaos is great – get some and donate!**

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Lifeworlds 'Little Book of Chaos' – <https://www.lifeworlds.global/shop/product/little-book-of-chaos/>

Lifeworlds 'Little Book of Help' – <https://www.lifeworlds.global/shop/product/little-book-of-help/>

[Care For The Family](#) produce Christian materials and do training in relation to bereavement.