



ACTION AWARENESS EAST MIDLANDS
FOR ALL OF YOUR TRAINING NEEDS & ASSISTANCE



Suicide



Suicide

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Message From the Founder and Director

Hello my name is Wayne Jones, and I am the founder and director of this charity.

I established Action Awareness East Midlands in 2020 following my personal experiences with bullying and the heartbreaking loss of two friends to suicide. I believe that if they felt they had someone, or an organization to turn to, they might still be with us today. That belief drives our mission to combat bullying and prevent suicide. We're also dedicated to providing education and support to those who need it most.

Since we started, our charity has grown stronger, and we are always incredibly grateful for your donations, time, and support—without which, we wouldn't be here today.

If you need any advice or information, please don't hesitate to reach out.

Warm regards

Wayne Jones



Introduction: A Message of Hope

This guide is for anyone who has been affected by suicide. Whether you are struggling yourself, grieving the loss of a loved one, or worried about someone close to you, please know that you are not alone. There is hope, and there is help available.

Understanding the Scale: Suicide in the UK Suicide is a major public health issue, but it is also one of the most preventable causes of death.

- In 2023, there were over 7,000 suicides registered in the UK, which equates to an average of 19 suicides a day.
- Males continue to be at a significantly higher risk, accounting for approximately three-quarters of all registered suicides in the UK.
- Suicide is the leading cause of death for people aged under 35 in the UK.

While these statistics are sobering, they also highlight the importance of the services that save lives every day. Research has shown that contact with helplines can reduce feelings of hopelessness and suicidal thoughts, demonstrating that reaching out for help is a powerful and life-saving step.



a simple conversation can save a life...



For Those Considering Suicide

If you are reading this because you are experiencing suicidal thoughts, please know that you are not alone and that there is help available. The pain you are feeling can be overwhelming and may feel endless, but feelings and circumstances can and do change. Your life is valuable, and there is a different future possible for you.

Immediate Help & Support

When you are in a crisis, reaching out can feel impossible, but it is the most important step you can take. These services are free, confidential, and available 24/7.

- **Samaritans:** You can call them for free, any time, from any phone. They offer a compassionate, listening ear and won't judge you.
 - **Call: 116 123**
- **Shout:** If you prefer not to talk on the phone, you can text this service for free, confidential support.
 - **Text: "SHOUT" to 85258**
- **Emergency Services:** If you have a plan to end your life, have already harmed yourself, or are in immediate danger, please get help straight away.
 - **Call: 999**
 - Go to your nearest **Accident & Emergency (A&E)** department.

Steps You Can Take Right Now

Getting through the next five minutes, or the next hour, is the most important thing. Try one of these small actions to help you through the immediate moment.

- **Delay:** Promise yourself that you will wait a certain amount of time before acting on your feelings. Even just a few minutes can make a difference.
 - **Reach Out:** Call a trusted friend, family member, or one of the helplines listed above. Tell someone what you're feeling.
 - **Go to a Safe Place:** Go to a public space or a place where you feel secure. Being around others can help to break the isolation.
 - **Create a "Staying Safe" Plan:** Write down three things you can do to get through a crisis, such as calling a friend, listening to a favourite song, or holding an object that brings you comfort.
- Remember, your life is worth fighting for. Please reach out.



Why We Stay

In the quietest moments, when the world's noise fades and our own thoughts grow loud, we may find ourselves grappling with the profound question of why we stay. Why do we push through the difficult days, the gnawing anxieties, and the moments of profound sadness? The reasons aren't always grand or monumental; they're often found in the small, unassuming corners of our lives.

One of the most powerful reasons to live is the simple, honest beauty of the world. It's in the way sunlight filters through the leaves of a tree in autumn, the first sip of a perfectly made coffee on a cold morning, or the shared laughter with a friend that makes your sides ache. These moments, both fleeting and forever, are what stitch together the fabric of a meaningful life. They are constant, unassuming gifts, waiting to be noticed.

We also stay for the connections we have with others. The bond with a loving family member, the unwavering support of a loyal friend, or even the kindness of a stranger can be a reminder that we are not alone. Our lives are intertwined with those around us, and our presence matters more than we can ever know. There's a future conversation you haven't had yet, a person you've yet to meet who will change your life, a hug you've yet to receive that will feel like home. These are not platitudes; they are the fundamental truths of human experience.

Another reason is the simple act of self-discovery. We are all works in progress, capable of learning, growing, and changing in ways we can't even imagine. There's a hobby you might fall in love with, a skill you could master, or a passion you've yet to uncover that will bring you immense joy. Life offers a continuous opportunity to become more of who you are meant to be.

Perhaps the most important reason is hope. Not the naive hope that everything will be perfect, but the resilient hope that things can get better. It's the belief that even in the darkest of times, there is a path forward, and that with support, effort, and time, joy and peace can return.

When the reasons feel distant, remember to hold on to the smallest things. The warmth of a pet, a good book, a favourite song. These aren't insignificant; they are anchors. The world needs you in it, and there is always a reason to stay.



For Those Grieving a Suicide Loss

Losing someone to suicide is a devastating and complex form of grief. Alongside the deep sadness, you may feel overwhelming emotions such as shock, confusion, guilt, and anger. These feelings are normal, and it is important to know that you are not to blame. The person who died was in immense pain, and you are not responsible for their actions.

Understanding Your Grief

Grief after suicide is different from other forms of bereavement. You may be trying to make sense of what happened, questioning why it occurred, and replaying conversations in your mind. You may also feel a deep sense of loneliness, as this type of loss can be isolating. Please be kind to yourself and give yourself permission to feel all of these emotions.

Finding Support

You don't have to navigate this journey alone. There are organisations that specialise in helping people who have been bereaved by suicide.

- **Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide (SOBS):** This charity exists to help those bereaved by suicide. They offer a free-to-call helpline and a network of local support groups where you can connect with others who have had a similar experience.
 - **Helpline:** 0300 111 5065
 - **Website:** www.uksobs.org
- **Cruse Bereavement Support:** This charity provides support for anyone who has been bereaved, regardless of the cause. They offer a helpline, face-to-face support, and a comprehensive website with resources.
 - **Website:** www.cruse.org.uk
- **The Tomorrow Project:** This is a suicide bereavement support service that works across the East Midlands. They offer one-to-one support, group sessions, and practical help for those affected by suicide.
 - **Website:** www.tomorrowproject.org.uk



For Those Concerned About Someone Else

It can be incredibly distressing to worry that someone you care about may be suicidal. You may feel helpless or unsure of what to do. The most important thing you can do is to reach out and let them know you care. Your support could be the lifeline they need.

Recognising the Warning Signs

Someone at risk of suicide may not ask for help directly, but they might show some of the following signs. These can be behavioural, verbal, or emotional changes.

- **Behavioural Changes:** withdrawing from friends and social activities, an increase in risky behaviour, or giving away possessions.
- **Verbal Cues:** making statements like, "I'm a burden," "I can't go on," or "I'd be better off dead."
- **Emotional Shifts:** experiencing a sudden calmness after a period of intense depression, appearing hopeless or trapped, or having extreme mood swings. Trust your gut instinct. If something feels wrong, it probably is.

How to Start the Conversation

Many people worry that asking about suicide will plant the idea in someone's head. This is a myth. Asking directly shows that you are taking their pain seriously and gives them permission to open up.

- **Be Direct and Caring:** Find a private, calm space to talk. Start with what you've observed, such as, "I've noticed you've been more withdrawn lately and I'm worried about you." Then, ask the question directly: "**Are you thinking about suicide?**"
- **Listen Without Judgment:** If they say "yes," remain calm and let them know you are there for them. You don't need to fix their problems. Your role is to listen and validate their feelings.

What to Do Next

- **Stay with Them:** Do not leave them alone if you believe they are at immediate risk.



- **Help Them Get Help:** Encourage them to call a helpline or seek professional help, and offer to do it with them. If they refuse, you can call a helpline yourself for advice. If they are in immediate danger, call **999**.
- **Remove Means:** If it is safe to do so, remove or secure any items that could be used to harm themselves, such as medications or weapons. **Remember, you are not responsible for "saving" them, but you can be a vital link to professional help.**

Jeremy's Story of Hope: "My Journey Back to the Light"

This is the story of a Jeremy's journey. While some details have been changed for privacy, the message is authentic. It is a testament to the fact that healing is possible, and a future beyond the pain is waiting for you.



The Darkness

"I had been battling depression for years, but it felt like I was losing the fight. The world had become a grey, hollow place, and every day felt like a monumental effort. I felt like a burden to my family and friends, and the isolation was all-consuming. The idea of suicide wasn't something I just thought about; it felt like a quiet, comforting solution to the pain. My final breaking point was a feeling of complete



hopelessness. I genuinely believed that my life could not, and would not, get any better.

The Turning Point & Journey Back

"The day I planned to end my life, a friend called. I had been avoiding her, but for some reason, I answered. She said, 'I've noticed you've been quiet. I'm worried about you.' Her words broke through the noise in my head. I didn't talk about suicide, but I admitted I was struggling. She came over, and we just sat. She didn't try to fix me, but she stayed with me. Just knowing someone cared enough to sit with me in my darkest moment was a turning point. It gave me the courage to call a helpline later that night."

"That call was the first step on a long road. I was put in touch with a therapist who specialised in CBT. We worked on challenging the negative thoughts that were controlling me. The progress was slow, and there were setbacks, but each small step felt like a victory. I started with simple things, like going for a short walk each day, and gradually worked my way up. I learned that my feelings were not facts, and that even if I felt hopeless, it didn't mean my situation was."

The Light

"Today, I'm living a life I once thought was impossible. I still have bad days, but they are just days, not my whole life. I have a new purpose, volunteering with a mental health charity and sharing my story. I want others to know that the pain you are in today is not your forever. It is a part of your story, not the end of it. My message is simple: please, hold on. Reach out. There are people who want to listen, and there is a life on the other side of this. My journey back to the light has shown me that there is always, always hope."

If you have been affected by this story and feel the need to speak to someone immediately, please contact:

Samaritans UK

Samaritans provides a safe space for you to talk any time you like, in your own way, about whatever's on your mind.

Helpline: 116 123

This number is free to call, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. You don't have to be suicidal to call; you can talk to them about anything that's troubling you.



Assisted Suicide

As of the date of publication assisted suicide is illegal throughout the UK. However, there are significant legal and political developments currently underway, particularly in England and Wales, that could change the law.

Here is a breakdown of the current legal situation:

The Current Law

England and Wales: Under the Suicide Act 1961, it is a criminal offence to "encourage or assist" the suicide or attempted suicide of another person. The maximum penalty is 14 years in prison.

Scotland: There is no specific offence of "assisting suicide." Instead, a person who helps another to die could be prosecuted for murder or culpable homicide, which carries a life sentence.

Northern Ireland: Assisting or encouraging suicide is illegal under the Criminal Justice (Northern Ireland) Act 1966.

Prosecution Guidelines

While the law makes assisted suicide illegal, in practice, the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) in England and Wales has issued a policy that sets out factors for and against prosecution. The policy states that a prosecution is less likely if the person who provided assistance was:

- Wholly motivated by compassion.
- Acting on a voluntary, clear, settled, and informed decision by the person who died.
- A close relative or friend.

This guidance has led to few prosecutions for compassionate acts of assisted suicide. However, it's important to understand that these are just guidelines, and prosecution is still a possibility.



Current Legislative Developments

The legal landscape is not static, and there is a lot of debate and legislative action on this issue.

England and Wales: A significant "Assisted Dying Bill" has been making its way through Parliament. The Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life) Bill, a private member's bill, has already passed its Third Reading in the House of Commons and is now being considered by the House of Lords. If it becomes law, it would allow a person who is terminally ill and expected to die within six months, with mental capacity, to request and be lawfully provided with assistance to end their own life. It would include strict safeguards, such as requiring assessments by two doctors and approval from a review panel.

Scotland: A separate bill is also being considered by the Scottish Parliament.

Isle of Man and Jersey: The Isle of Man has passed an assisted dying bill, and Jersey is also considering a similar law.

Euthanasia vs. Assisted Suicide

It's crucial to distinguish between these two terms, as they have different legal implications:

Assisted Suicide: This is where a person is provided with the means to end their own life, but they take the final action themselves. The current legal reform efforts in the UK are focused on legalizing this.

Euthanasia: This is where a doctor or other person administers the lethal substance to end a person's life. This is considered murder or manslaughter and is illegal throughout the UK, with the potential for life imprisonment. The new bills do not propose to legalize euthanasia.

The legal situation is complex and subject to ongoing change. As it stands, assisting a suicide remains a criminal offence in the UK, but new legislation is in development which may change this considerably.



For Those Considering Suicide or in a Mental Health Crisis

These organisations offer confidential support for people who are feeling overwhelmed or having suicidal thoughts. They are available 24/7.

- **Samaritans** 📞: Provides a safe space to talk about anything that's troubling you, no matter how large or small the issue.
 - Helpline: 116 123 (free, 24/7)
 - Email: jo@samaritans.org
 - Website: www.samaritans.org
- **Shout** 💬: The UK's first 24/7 text support service for anyone in crisis. It's a free, confidential service.
 - Text: "SHOUT" to 85258
 - Website: www.giveusashout.org
- **Mind** 🧠: A leading mental health charity that provides advice and support to empower anyone experiencing a mental health problem.
 - Infoline: 0300 123 3393 (Monday to Friday, 9am - 6pm)
 - Website: www.mind.org.uk
- **Papyrus HOPELineUK** 💛: A specialist suicide prevention charity for young people up to the age of 35.
 - Helpline: 0800 068 41 41 (Monday to Friday 9am - 10pm, Weekends and Bank Holidays 2pm - 10pm)
 - Website: www.papyrus-uk.org

If you are in immediate danger or have already harmed yourself, please call 999 or go to your nearest Accident & Emergency (A&E) department.



For Those Bereaved by Suicide

This type of grief is complex and can be incredibly isolating. These organisations provide specific support for those who have lost a loved one to suicide.

- **Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide (SoBS):** A charity dedicated to providing support to people who have been bereaved by suicide. They offer a helpline, peer support groups, and a forum.
 - Helpline: 0300 111 5065
 - Website: www.uksoobs.org
- **Cruse Bereavement Support:** A national charity that offers free support to people who have experienced bereavement. They have specific resources for those grieving a suicide.
 - Helpline: 0808 808 1677
 - Website: www.cruse.org.uk
- The Tomorrow Project 🌱: A suicide prevention and bereavement support service with a focus on helping people across the East Midlands.
 - Website: www.tomorrowproject.org.uk

**Remember, reaching out for help is a sign of strength,
and these organisations are there to support you.**

Contact Us

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