

# Suicide prevention guidance for staff

Suicide Prevention is everybody's responsibility and remains a high priority all for all partner organisations working in Rotherham. The following information has been developed to assist paid and unpaid staff to have those conversations with people who might be at risk of suicide. Please make a commitment to do the **Zero Suicide Alliance Training** this can be accessed through Rotherham's suicide prevention campaign, Be the One: [www.be-the-one.co.uk](http://www.be-the-one.co.uk)

**Asking someone if they feel suicidal** or are planning to end their life may not feel like the right thing to do but in fact professionals do recommend asking direct questions about suicide. Some people worry that this might indirectly encourage the person who is feeling suicidal to act on their feelings, but in reality, research has shown that speaking openly about suicide decreases the likelihood of the person acting on their feelings.

**Asking simple, direct questions** can encourage them to be honest about how they are feeling. Many people feel relieved and less isolated when they are asked. Be the One uses three easy steps to help with this conversation: **Talk, Listen and Care, the TLC approach to suicide prevention.**

## 1 Be the one to TALK

If you are worried that someone is going to kill themselves, it can feel hard to talk about.

However **YOU** could be the one who makes a difference.

- If you see someone in distress and something doesn't seem right, ask them if they are okay. It might just start a conversation that will stop them killing themselves.
- If you are worried about a friend, work colleague or family member, talk to them. Have an open conversation, don't be afraid to say what you're thinking. *"I'm worried you are going to kill yourself. Please will you talk to me about how you are feeling?"*

## 2 Be the one to LISTEN

You don't have to be an expert. You just have to listen.

Talking to people can make them feel less alone. It can encourage them to seek professional help. Most importantly, it makes them feel listened to and that can save lives.

- Be patient - it might take a few attempts at getting them to open up.
- Don't judge - allow them to speak openly without fear of being criticised.
- Say things like *"tell me more"* to keep the conversation going.
- **Ask open questions.** These are questions that invite someone to say more than 'yes' or 'no', such as *"How have you been feeling?"* or *"What happened next?"*
- **Give them time.** You might feel anxious to hear their answers, but it helps if you let them take the time they need.

- **Take them seriously.** People who talk about suicide do sometimes act on their feelings -it's a common myth that they don't. It's best to assume that they are telling the truth about feeling suicidal.
- **Try not to judge.** You might feel shocked, upset or frightened, but it's important not to blame the person for how they are feeling. They may have taken a big step by telling you.
- **Don't skirt around the topic.** There is still a taboo around talking about suicide which can make it even harder for people experiencing these feelings to open up and feel understood. Direct questions about suicide like 'Are you having suicidal thoughts?' or 'Have you felt like you want to end your life?' can help someone talk about how they are feeling.

### 3 Be the one to CARE

Nobody knows exactly what other people are going through in life. Everybody has lows and bad times, and everybody responds to them differently. If we all resolve to care more about other people, we can make the world an easier place for people who are struggling with mental health problems. Not undermining their feelings and letting them know that you believe them and want to be there for them can make a difference.

- Be the one to act if you are worried about someone killing themselves.
- Take some FREE suicide prevention training (**ZeroSuicideAlliance**).
- Talk to your organisation about what it is doing to look after its employees mental health.
- Take the One promise to get involved in the **Be the One campaign**.
- For more information on TLC and free training, [www.be-the-one.co.uk](http://www.be-the-one.co.uk)

## How to help a person who has thoughts of suicide:

- Have you spoken to anyone about this?
- Have you got a mental health worker? Anyone that you work with (support worker/ social worker)
- Would you like to speak to them? Direct the person to contact their worker.
- If they don't have a worker, ask if they feel they could speak to the Crisis team (Freephone **0800 6529571**), Text only phone for deaf/hard of hearing: Please start your text with Deaf to: **07771933869** (this is not free phone).
- Text SHOUT to **85258** 24/7 (Free to text) or the Samaritans (Freephone **116 123**)
- Give the person the crisis team number and ask them to make contact – they need to be willing to engage and phoning directly allows the person to be in control of their own care. If the person is unable to phone for any reason- ask if you can contact the crisis team and request crisis Team contact the person directly.
- Have you been to see your GP?

**If you feel genuinely concerned for their wellbeing and imminent harm is a possibility, ring the emergency services. This is a 999 call.**

**The Crisis team are a 24/7 service but are not an emergency service. Our initial contact is a telephone triage and a clinician will contact you to explore what support you may need, but this may not be straight away.**

If a person uses self-harm as a threat, for example: *"if you don't get me a house I will kill myself"*

- Be firm, assure the person you want to help.
- Continue with your job as you would normally.

If the behaviour escalates, if you are not able to help in the way that they want, consider your own safety. The individual is accountable for their behaviour, you are doing your job. Again, the police can be called if you feel there is a threat to your safety or the safety of the person on the call.

These calls/ situations can be distressing. Remember to take a break after any such call and talk to colleagues or your manager to talk it through. If any of the issues affect you, then please seek support yourself. It is also important to document the conversation as you would usually.

## Useful Contacts:

**Crisis team:** Freephone 0800 6529571

Text only phone for deaf/hard of hearing:  
Please start your text with Deaf to:  
07771933869 (this is not free phone)

**Text SHOUT** to 85258 24/7 (Free to text)

**Samaritans:** 116 123 (Freephone)

Email us on [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org) if you prefer to write your thoughts down, response time is 24 Hours.  
<https://www.samaritans.org/>

## Other sources of advice and support

**Be the One:** [www.be-the-one.co.uk](http://www.be-the-one.co.uk)

**CALM: the campaign against living miserably:**  
0800 585858 <https://thecalmzone.net>

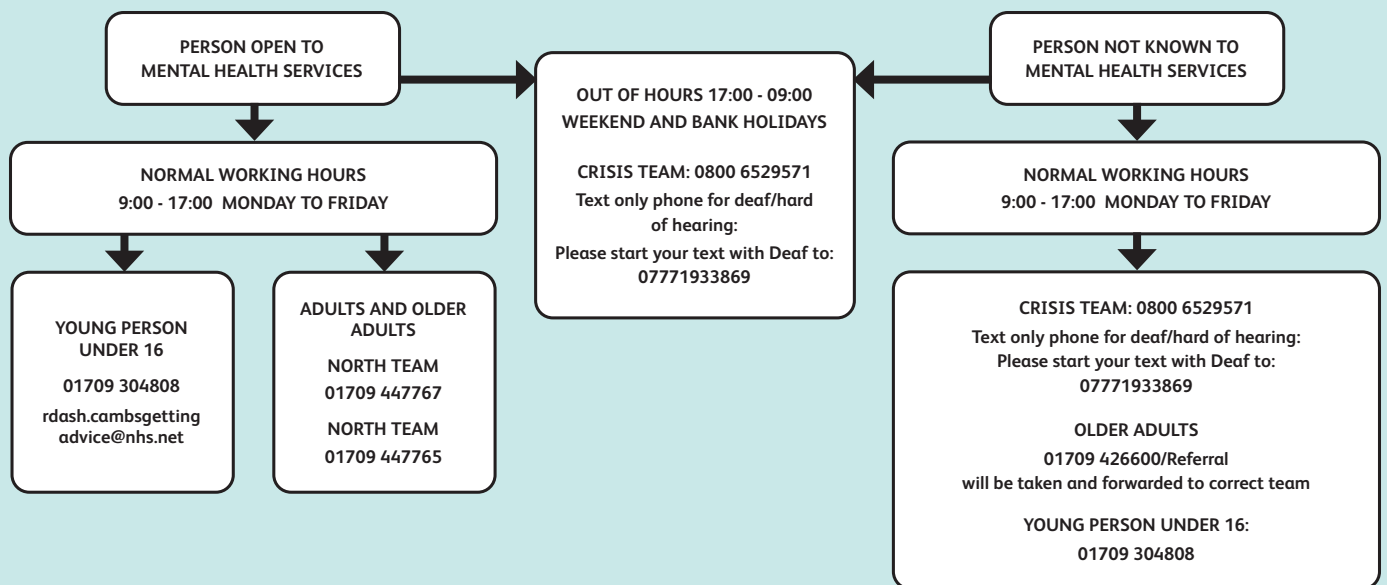
**PAPYRUS:** this organisation is for young people, or for some one worried about a young person. For confidential advice contact HOPELINK, 9-12 midnight everyday of the year. 0800 0684141 Visit [www.papyrus-uk.org](http://www.papyrus-uk.org)

**Rotherhive:** advice in many areas that affect mental health: <https://rotherhive.co.uk>

**Wellness Hive:** <https://rotherhive.co.uk/wellness-hive/> this provides a wide range of interactive resources

**Working Well:** <https://rotherhive.co.uk/workingwell>

### People expressing suicidal thoughts



**Remember - CRISIS is not an emergency service, if there is imminent risk please ring 999 or advise caller to do so.**

**Imminent Risk** means an **immediate** and **impending threat** of a person causing substantial physical injury to self or others. If this is the case ring 999.