

## Suicide Ideation/Feelings: 7 Minute Briefing

### 1. Introduction – About Suicidal ideation/Feelings

Suicide is when someone intentionally ends their own life. It is a very tragic response to difficult situations and feelings, perhaps most tragic because it is preventable.

Suicidal ideation/feelings are when a person has thoughts to end their life, because they feel overwhelmed by their problems and unable to see a way out. They may or may not have plans or intent to end their life. Suicidal thoughts can be complex, frightening, confusing and lonely. Having suicidal thoughts does not mean that someone has a mental illness, but there is a connection between mental ill health and suicidal thoughts.

Research suggests asking people if they are having suicidal thoughts is more likely to protect them from suicide, as it encourages them to be open and talk about their feelings

### 2. Research

Over 6,000 people a year die by suicide in England. Reasons for which are complex with many contributing factors.

- The male rate remains 3 times higher
- 3 out of 4 people who die by suicide are not in contact with mental health services at the time of their death
- 3 out of 4 suicides are by men, with middle-aged men having the highest rate
- Nearly half of people who died by suicide lived alone
- Following a stay in hospital as a mental health in-patient, the risk of suicide is higher very soon after returning home
- For every suicide, there can be up to 135 people impacted

### 3. Risk Factors

Reasons why a person takes their own life are complex, with no one single cause or solution. **However, the absence of risk does not mean the absence of any risk of suicide**

Significant risk factors linked to the wider determinants of health such as:

- Financial difficulties, being in debt or harmful gambling
- Being unemployed
- Living in poor quality housing
- Experiencing, witnessing or perpetrating domestic abuse
- Trauma
- Being addicted to substances
- Having a physical illness
- Being lonely or socially isolated or suffered bereavement
- Being exposed to harmful online content
- Neurodivergence

### 4. Warning Signs

A change in someone's personality and behaviour may be a sign that they are having suicidal thoughts. You may be the best judge of when someone you know is behaving differently. Changes can include:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| - Becoming anxious                        | - Not wanting to be around people including families, friends and professionals |
| - Becoming confrontational                | - Becoming quiet  |
| - Saying negative things about themselves | - Mood swings   |
| - Expressing feelings of hopelessness     | - Giving belongings away  |

**There are indicators that suggest someone is more likely to attempt suicide. These may include:**

- Threatening to hurt or take their own life
- Actively looking for ways to take their own life (having a plan/method)
- Talking or writing about death, dying or suicide

## 5. What we do locally?

- Over the period 2022-2024, there were a total of 75 St Helens resident suicide verdicts recorded (based on date of registration)
- Suicide prevention is everyone's business and requires a multi-agency approach to address the risk factors which contribute towards suicide
- Cheshire & Merseyside Suicide Prevention Strategy for 2022-27 identified particular population groups at risk of suicide; middle-aged men, people who have self-harmed, those in contact with mental health services or the criminal justice system, people who are neurodiverse and individuals affected by suicide
- A real time surveillance system enables the identification of trends, connections and to take appropriate action
- St Helens Borough Suicide Prevention Strategy 2023-27 aims to build resilience and prevent people falling into crisis by tackling the risk factors of suicide, support people who experience a time of personal crisis, create an environment where everyone who needs help knows where to and how to get it and continue its commitment to build suicide safer communities

## 6. What help is available

If you are a professional working with an adult experiencing a mental health emergency, in the first instance contact the adults GP (out of hours contact 111). If you are already having care via a community mental health team, contact them directly.

**Urgent mental health crisis support** is available 24/7. For people who no longer feel able to cope or be in control of their situation. Call the NHS 111 and option 2 for mental health

- A&E should only be used when there are serious physical injuries which require treatment within the hospital environment.
- Only call 999 if immediate, life-threatening assistance is required.

### Non urgent help:

- Make an appointment to see GP.
- Mental health support in St Helens: [www.sthelens.gov.uk/mmentalhealth](http://www.sthelens.gov.uk/mmentalhealth)
- Samaritans 24hr support for anyone struggling to cope call 116 123
- **AMPARO** – free confidential support for anyone affected by suicide. Call 0330 088 9255 or visit [www.amparo.org.uk/](http://www.amparo.org.uk/)

## 7. Further Reading/training

Free online suicide prevention training will help give you the skills and confidence to talk to someone who may be considering suicide. [www.zerosuicidealliance.com/training](http://www.zerosuicidealliance.com/training)

You can download a Safety Plan to complete for yourself or with another individual via the Stay Alive app: [StayAlive - Essential suicide prevention for everyday life](#)

You can find out more about suicide prevention in Cheshire and Merseyside [www.no-more.co.uk](http://www.no-more.co.uk)

**Guidance for managing risk v safeguarding in relation to Mental Health, Self-Harm and Suicidal Ideation to add link to our doc when finalised**