



# SANE Steps

## How to help when someone is suicidal

SANE Factsheet



The USP Counselling Centre thanks SANE Australia for providing this fact sheet.

If you believe someone is thinking about ending their life it's natural to feel panic or even want to avoid thinking about it – however, there are a number of practical things you can do to help . . .

### 1 Let them know you are concerned

- Ⓢ Tell them that you are concerned, and that you are there to help.

### 2 Ask if they are thinking about suicide and if they have made any plans

- Ⓢ Talking about suicide will not make them take action
- Ⓢ Asking shows that you care
- Ⓢ Asking will help them talk about their feelings and plans – the first step to getting help.

### 3 Take action to get help now

- Ⓢ Tell them that there are other options to suicide
- Ⓢ Don't agree to keep their suicidal thoughts or plans a secret
- Ⓢ Don't assume they will get better without help or that they will seek help on their own.

If the person is thinking about suicide, encourage them to

- Make an appointment with a GP – offer for someone to go along with them.
- Contact a counsellor or employee assistance program, family member or friend.
- Contact a specialist Helpline for information and advice.

If a plan to end their life has been made

- Check if they are able to carry out this plan – do they have a time, place or method?
- Do what you can to keep them safe by removing access to items.
- Contact the Psychiatric Emergency Team at the local hospital and the police on 000, report that the person is suicidal, has made a plan, and you fear for their safety.

### 4 Take care of yourself too

- Ⓢ Look after yourself – it is emotionally demanding to support someone who is suicidal
- Ⓢ Find someone to talk things over with – colleagues, family, friends or a Helpline.

#### Factors that increase the risk of suicide include

- Ⓢ Expressing feelings of hopelessness and helplessness
- Ⓢ Being socially isolated
- Ⓢ Having a recent loss – relationship, death, job
- Ⓢ Making a previous suicide attempt
- Ⓢ Having a friend, family member or work colleague who has died by suicide
- Ⓢ Having a mental illness
- Ⓢ Behaving in a risky manner – drugs, alcohol abuse, driving recklessly.

#### How do I find out more?

SANE Australia also produces a range of easy-to-read publications and multimedia resources on mental illness. For more information about this topic see:

- Ⓢ *SANE Guide to Staying Alive* - Provides practical step-by-step hints and advice for dealing with suicidal thoughts and behaviour when there is mental illness.
- Ⓢ *SANE Guide to Depression* - Helps people diagnosed with depression and their family and friends by explaining what it means to have depression, the treatments available and what a person can do to help themselves.
- Ⓢ *SANE Guide for Families* - Explains how to handle common issues associated with being a carer such as developing a positive attitude, looking after yourself and getting help.

Use the Order Form which came with this Factsheet or visit the SANE Bookshop at [www.sane.org](http://www.sane.org)

#### Where to call for help

- Ⓢ Immediate assistance  
Police: 000. Local hospital  
Psychiatric Emergency Team
- Ⓢ 24-hour crisis telephone counseling  
Lifeline: 13 11 14.  
Kids Helpline: 1800 55 1800.
- Ⓢ Information and advice  
SANE Helpline: 1800 18 SANE (7263)  
9-5 weekdays EST.  
Request free InfoPack 24 hours.

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