

**Would you  
know what to do  
if someone told you  
they were thinking  
of suicide?**



Connecting for Life

## Understanding suicide and its prevention

AN INFORMATION BOOKLET FOR FAMILIES AND FRIENDS

Thank you.

We could not have produced this booklet without the advice and expertise of professionals and family members who have a specific interest in supporting someone who is experiencing suicidal thoughts. We would like to express sincere gratitude to all who reviewed the draft form of this booklet.

We hope the information in it will help families and friends to support a loved one who is thinking about suicide.



Gerry Raleigh *Director* National Office for Suicide Prevention



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## About this booklet

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In Ireland, nearly 10 people die by suicide each week. It is one of the greatest tragedies of our society. Every death by suicide devastates close family members, friends, colleagues, neighbours and the surrounding community. Some people suffer in silence, others speak out. Often we don't understand how someone who is suicidal is feeling and don't know what will help.

When a friend or loved one tells you they are thinking of taking their own life, it can be frightening and unnerving. You might find it hard to understand or it may seem unbelievable. You may feel helpless or hopeless, or both.

This booklet is for everyone in that situation. It gives basic information to help you understand what brings someone to a point in their lives where they are feeling suicidal. It also gives practical information on how you can support them and how you can mind yourself through it all.

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## Suicide – myths & facts

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### Myths

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People who talk about suicide don't die by suicide.

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People with suicidal thoughts are absolutely intent on dying.

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Suicide happens without warning.

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Once a person thinks of suicide they will have those thoughts forever.

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An improvement after a crisis means the suicide risk is over.

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Suicide happens mainly among the poor.

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You are either the suicidal type or you're not.

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### Facts

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Most people who kill themselves have given definite warning signs of their intention. Some of these signs are direct, others are more subtle.

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Most people who think of suicide have mixed feelings about living and dying. Many don't really want to die but they don't want to live the way they are living and may not be able to see an alternative other than suicide.

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People thinking of suicide may talk or act in ways that indicate they are thinking of taking their own life.

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Suicidal thoughts may return, but they are not permanent. In some people, they may never return if they get the support they need.

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Some suicides happen when things seem to be getting better because the person now has the energy and will to turn despairing thoughts into self-destructive action.

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Suicide happens in all groups in society.

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Anyone can turn to suicide as a way of coping with obvious or perceived stress.

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## How does someone feel when they are suicidal?

Someone who is feeling suicidal is generally in a state of extreme emotional pain. They may believe their situation and how they are feeling won't or can't improve, and feel powerless to create change in their lives. They may see themselves as being worthless and a burden on those around them.

These thoughts lead to feelings of guilt and shame. They may believe it will be best for everyone if they are no longer around. They may just want to end the pain they are living with and believe that there is no other solution to the problems they face.

It is possible that someone who is feeling suicidal has withdrawn from those around them and is not talking about their feelings. Therefore, it can be very hard for you to know what they are feeling and thinking.

Many people who are thinking of taking their own life do not actually want to die but can't see any other way out of their situation. Their suffering is real. Very often they are undecided, almost disconnected, about their death, and are confused about their suicidal thoughts or intentions. It is likely to be a very exhausting time for them and this can add to their despair. Although they may have a plan around what they are going to do, many people still wish and hope for a different option up until the very end.

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## Who is at risk of suicide?

Suicidal thoughts or feelings don't arrive out of the blue. Many factors come together to increase someone's risk. Usually, there is a mix of personal and social factors. It is rare that one event makes someone's life so unbearable that suicide seems the only option. However, it is important to remember that you may not know the sources of stress that could contribute to the likelihood of suicide. Here are some of the more common factors.

**Men.** Most deaths by suicide happen in men aged 20-64. In Ireland, statistics suggest that young men are most at risk. However, the rates remain high for men up to their mid-60s.

**Women.** Suicide in women is most common during middle age. However, in recent years, the rate of suicide has been increasing in young women aged 15-19.

**Mental health difficulties.** These can arise for any of us at any stage in our lives. Research has shown that people who are diagnosed with a mental health difficulty by a doctor are at a higher risk of suicide than those who have not. However, it is important to note that not all of those who have been diagnosed will experience suicidal thoughts. In the same way, not everyone who is suicidal will have a mental health difficulty.

**History of self-harm.** This involves doing something that causes injury to the body. The most common methods of self-harm are cutting and taking overdoses. Self-harm is generally used to cope with, or ease, emotional distress. Over time, it may become less effective, and the emotional distress may increase. As this happens, thoughts of suicide may become more likely. Sometimes people who self-harm may accidentally end up taking their own life through their self-harming actions.

**History of suicide attempts.** Someone who has attempted suicide in the past has a higher risk of attempting again, especially in the days and weeks after an attempt. An attempted suicide may increase their sense of isolation, guilt and worthlessness. It is important to take all attempts or possible attempts seriously, and to get help and support for your loved one. You will find more details about support services later in this booklet.

**Discharge from in-patient care or emergency department.** The risk of suicide is high immediately after discharge from a psychiatric hospital or an emergency department, if the person attended because of suicidal thoughts or

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behaviours. They may have a sense that they will be living with mental health difficulties for a long time, or they may believe they do not have the supports or inner resources to deal with their difficulties. They are at greater risk if they live alone or are returning to significant stresses that they feel they cannot change.

**Alcohol or drug misuse.** This is common among people who die by suicide. Drugs and alcohol can work in a number of ways when someone is in distress. They can lead to impulsive behaviours where someone may make decisions without considering what may happen afterwards. Also, alcohol is a depressant which increases the likelihood that someone will take a more negative view of their lives. If someone is using alcohol or drugs to deal with their problems, this may prevent them from using healthier coping strategies. Misuse of alcohol or drugs over a long time can lead to poor quality of life and damage relationships, work and other areas of life.

**History of suicide in family or friends.** This can increase someone's risk as suicide can appear a more acceptable option once it has been taken by others. The way in which a community responds to a death by suicide, for example through Facebook memorial pages, can sometimes glorify the death. This may make suicide appealing to someone who is vulnerable. Young people, in particular, might feel that they will be more loved after their death than when alive. Communities that support grieving families while at the same time showing the finality of death, can help prevent other deaths from happening.

**Low levels of social contact.** People who are isolated and withdrawn from others or who don't have a support network to draw on in times of difficulty are more vulnerable to suicide than those who are well connected and have a strong sense of belonging.

**Poverty.** The difficulties associated with poverty can increase suicide risk. These include low levels of education, poor living conditions, social isolation, increased reliance on drugs and alcohol, and less access to services.

**Loss of employment.** Unemployment can challenge someone in ways they haven't been challenged before. The loss of a job can also mean that someone has lost the supports they previously relied on, such as a regular income, social contact, a reason for living, a sense of self-worth, and so on.

**Loss.** Any kind of loss is linked with increased suicide risk. It can include bereavement, relationship breakdown, job loss or financial loss. The risk is greater if the person feels that, as a result of the loss, life will never be good or they will never experience happiness again. An example could be if someone makes a bad decision at work which results in a major loss of status.

**History of abuse.** The emotional impact of past abuse can make someone more vulnerable to suicide. People who have experienced abuse can feel shame, depression and anxiety, and believe they are worthless. They may have poor family support and may be isolated. This can make it difficult to cope when times are tough.

**Personal behaviour.** It is possible that someone's personal behaviour has greatly hurt or angered the people they love. This, along with blaming themselves for their behaviour, can add to someone's distress, isolation, feeling of hopelessness, or feeling that they deserve to die.

**Impulsivity.** For some, taking their lives can be a spur-of-the-moment decision. This is more likely among young people who are struggling to cope with what is for them a major life event such as break up of a relationship.

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**Triggers.** For someone experiencing emotional pain, it often only takes one thing to tip them from a situation of barely coping to one that they see as unbearable. Known as ‘triggers’, these can include:

- ❖ a relationship ending;
- ❖ losing a job;
- ❖ an argument with a loved one;
- ❖ the death of someone close, either through suicide or some other cause;
- ❖ the return of symptoms of mental illness, particularly depression;
- ❖ trauma such as a violent attack, or bullying;
- ❖ failing exams.

**Protective Factors.** There are many things that can protect someone, even if they are experiencing emotional pain. These protective factors include:

- ❖ a daily structure or routine, for example, education or work;
- ❖ employment;
- ❖ access to health services;
- ❖ good coping skills;
- ❖ personal resilience (being able to bounce back from difficult situations);
- ❖ reasons for living;
- ❖ good physical and mental health;
- ❖ taking part in physical activities such as sport;
- ❖ feeling connected to the family (having a sense of belonging);
- ❖ social supports such as friends, family, support groups;
- ❖ religious or spiritual beliefs and practices;
- ❖ daily self-care such as exercising daily.

*Little things*

*can make a*

*big difference to*

*how we feel.*

*Find the little things*

*that work for you.*

**#littlthings campaign.** Little things can make a big difference to how we feel. Find the little things that work for you.

- ❖ Connect on Twitter: @littlthingshub
- ❖ Connect on Facebook: littlthingshub
- ❖ Visit [www.yourmentalhealth.ie](http://www.yourmentalhealth.ie)

Here are some little things that can make a big difference to our mental health and our wellbeing;

- ❖ **Keeping active** – being active every day, even something as simple as taking a walk, will help lighten your mood.
- ❖ **Talking about your problems** – problems feel smaller when they are shared with others, with-out having to be solved or fixed. Just talking about it will do you good.
- ❖ **Looking out for others** – listening to someone else in trouble or chatting with someone who seems distant can change their day, and even their lives. You don't have to fix it for them, just listening is a huge help.
- ❖ **Doing things with others** – taking part in a group activity that you enjoy will help you feel connected with others, whether it be a game of football, joining a choir, volunteering or whatever interests you.
- ❖ **Eating healthily** – a regular healthy, balanced and nutritious diet will help your physical and mental health as well as your mood.
- ❖ **Staying in touch** – catching up with friends and family is good for our mental health, reminding us that we're part of a community.
- ❖ **Sleeping well** – getting a good night's sleep of 7 or 8 hours, as often as you can, will help you feel better.



## How can I tell that someone is thinking of suicide?

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Most people experiencing emotional pain show signs of distress, but the only way to know if someone is thinking of suicide is to ask them.

Sometimes, people thinking of suicide may hide the signs so as not to be discovered. This may mean they don't want help or that they are ashamed because they are not coping and don't want anyone to know.

The following signs are common among people who are experiencing extreme emotional pain and may be considering taking their own life:

- ❖ withdrawing from friends and family;
- ❖ depression or very low mood (not necessarily a diagnosed mental illness) which may appear as:
  - loss of interest in usual activities;
  - extreme sadness, hopelessness or irritability;
  - changes in appetite;
  - changes in sleep patterns;
  - loss of energy;
  - negative comments about self;
- ❖ feelings of hopelessness, powerlessness and worthlessness;
- ❖ thinking constantly about suicide;
- ❖ sudden change from distress to saying they are 'at peace' or 'okay' (this may indicate that they have decided to take their life);
- ❖ talking about going away or saying goodbye;
- ❖ threatening suicide;
- ❖ talking or writing about suicide;
- ❖ putting personal affairs in order;
- ❖ giving away the things they own.



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This is not a full list. Signs can be difficult to recognise. Some people may show no signs yet still feel suicidal, others may show many signs yet be coping OK. Sometimes we don't recognise the signs even though they may seem obvious when we look back. This is often because we were too close to the situation at the time.

The fact that there are signs doesn't always mean that someone is suicidal. However, checking out what we see and getting the right kind of help will hopefully prevent the situation getting worse. The only way to know for sure if someone is thinking of taking their own life is if they tell you themselves or you ask them directly.

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## What to say to someone who is thinking about suicide

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1. **Let the person know you are concerned about them.**
2. **Ask about suicide.**
3. **Listen and understand.**
4. **Take all threats seriously.**

Talking to a friend or family member about their thoughts and feelings on suicide can be extremely difficult. It is hard to hear that a family member or friend is thinking of ending their life. But it is important to check if your loved one is experiencing suicidal thoughts and if they have a plan as to how they will end their life. Just because they are behaving in some of the ways listed above doesn't mean they are suicidal.

If you're unsure, the best way to find out is to ask if they are thinking about suicide. Allowing someone to express their feelings in a safe space can give them a sense of relief and may help them to see that they have other options.

The following suggestions may help you start the conversation:

### Step 1

#### Ask about changes you've noticed

- ❖ I noticed some changes in you lately and I am worried about you. I am here if there is anything you would like to talk about.
- ❖ You don't seem yourself. Would it help to talk?
- ❖ How long have you been feeling like this?
- ❖ Did something happen that led to you feeling like this?

### Step 2

#### Ask about suicide (here are some ways to ask about suicide)

- ❖ Are you having thoughts of suicide?
- ❖ Sometimes when people are feeling... (for example, lonely or hopeless) they may think of ending it all. Are you thinking of suicide?
- ❖ Have you been thinking of ending your life?



Many people don't ask about suicide for two reasons:

- ❖ they're afraid of putting the idea into someone's head; or
- ❖ they are afraid that if the answer is yes, they won't know what to do next.

Simply asking the question does not give someone the idea. Thoughts of suicide generally develop slowly over a long time and after a series of difficulties in life. By asking the question, you're acknowledging their distress and giving them an opportunity to talk about something that is probably very frightening for them. If the answer is yes, don't panic. Listen to them without judgement or blame.

### Step 3

#### **Listen and understand**

Give them space to explain what is going on for them and how they feel about it. Avoid responses which reject how they are feeling, lessen how they feel, or try to change their view of their situation.

Examples of what **NOT** to say:

- ❖ It's not that bad.
- ❖ Things will get better.
- ❖ How could you be so selfish?

These reactions may make the person feel misunderstood and more isolated than ever.

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Instead, acknowledge how hard life is for them:

- ❖ Can you tell me more about what's going on for you?
- ❖ If you want to tell me more, I'm here to listen.
- ❖ It sounds like you're dealing with a lot at the moment.
- ❖ I'm really sorry to hear that you're feeling like this right now.

#### Step 4

##### **Take all threats seriously**

You may be tempted to believe it is just talk, an accident or attention-seeking behaviour. However, it is really important to show that you believe your loved one and that you take any talk of suicide seriously. Most people do not talk or think about suicide lightly and there may be a serious risk of death. It is important that you accept that your loved one needs help to stay alive and that you support them in finding the help they need straight away.

##### **Remove potential means of suicide**

Such as medications, firearms, and so on.

##### **Don't leave them alone**

It is important to keep them safe. This will mean staying with them or organising for someone else to stay with them until they get help.

##### **Don't promise confidentiality**

Be honest and say that you cannot agree to keep this confidential because the most important thing is for them to stay safe while they get help to deal with the issues that are leading to their thoughts of suicide. It may be helpful to agree together who you can tell. Where possible, support them to tell someone else such as their family doctor (GP).

##### **Focus on their positive strengths**

How have they solved earlier problems? In the past, was there anyone they could rely on in bad times? Is there anyone who might help now?

##### **Get professional help**

Do everything you can to get the help they need. Your loved one is going to need help and support from others, not just you. Think about who else can help such as other family members, friends, work colleagues or professional help.

## Finding professional help

You can find professional help through:

- ❖ **www.yourmentalhealth.ie.**  
This website gives information on mental health and supports and services across the country.
- ❖ **your family doctor (GP).** If you don't have a GP, you can find a list under 'General Practitioners' in the Golden Pages. A GP can give you information about the supports available in your area.
- ❖ **the Emergency Department** of your nearest general hospital if you believe your loved one is in immediate danger. You can also contact the emergency services by calling 999 or 112.
- ❖ **HSE Mental Health Services.** If you or your loved one is involved with a mental health team, you can contact them directly. If not, you will need a referral letter from your GP to access this service.
- ❖ **Samaritans.** Samaritans is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and provides confidential, non-judgemental emotional support for people who are experiencing feelings of distress, despair or suicidal thoughts. **Free helpline: 116 123.**  
[www.samaritans.ie](http://www.samaritans.ie)
- ❖ **Childline.** Childline provides a free and confidential listening service to children and young people up to the age of 18. The Childline helpline is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Childline Online Chat is open every day from 10am to 10pm. **Free helpline: 1800 666 666.**  
**Online Chat: [www.childline.ie](http://www.childline.ie)**  
**Teentxt service: text the word "Talk" to 50101.**
- ❖ **Pieta House.** Pieta House provides a free, therapeutic counselling service to people who are experiencing thoughts of suicide and those who engage in self-harm.  
**Tel: (01) 601 0000. [www.pieta.ie](http://www.pieta.ie)**
- ❖ **Console.** This is a 24-hour suicide prevention and bereavement service for anyone experiencing thoughts of suicide or bereaved through suicide.  
**Free helpline: 1800 247 247.**
- ❖ **Private counselling services.** There are many counsellors and therapists across Ireland who may be able to offer an immediate appointment. To see a list of accredited counsellors in your area check the following websites:
  - Psychological Society of Ireland (PSI)  
[www.psihq.ie](http://www.psihq.ie)
  - Irish Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (IACP)  
[www.irish-counselling.ie](http://www.irish-counselling.ie)
  - Irish Council for Psychotherapy (ICP)  
[www.psychotherapy-ireland.com](http://www.psychotherapy-ireland.com)
  - Irish Association of Behavioural and Cognitive Psychotherapy (IABCP)  
[www.babcp.com/IABCP](http://www.babcp.com/IABCP)
  - Association of Agency-based Counselling in Ireland  
[www.aaci.ie](http://www.aaci.ie)

## Other ways to support someone who is suicidal

**Follow-up on treatment.** Encourage them to keep attending services they find useful and to put into practice what they have learned from attending these services.

**Be proactive.** People with suicidal thoughts often believe they can't be helped. Encourage them to get help and support them in doing so.

**Encourage positive lifestyle changes, such as exercise and a healthy diet.** Exercise is extremely important as it relieves stress, and promotes emotional well-being. What we eat and when we eat it can have a positive or negative effect on our mental health so it is important to encourage your loved one to stick to healthy foods and to eat regularly.

**Help identify triggers.** Helping someone to identify the things that may lead to a suicidal crisis can be really useful. You can also support them in identifying how to manage these triggers and where to get support when the triggers are present or are likely to be present in their lives. Encourage them to keep contact numbers handy for the people and places they can contact for support.

**Continue your support.** Your support is very important to make sure your loved one continues to access the help they need.

**Know your limits and support yourself.** Supporting a loved one who is experiencing suicidal thoughts can take a toll on you too. It is important to know when you have reached the limits of what you can give at any one time. Put in place supports for yourself so that you can continue to give the help you would like to your loved one.

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## Accompanying someone to the health services

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Make sure that the health professional you meet knows that your loved one has expressed suicidal thoughts to you. They may not be as clear with a health professional as they were with you, or they may say they are feeling better now.

## Questions to ask the health professional

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At this time of distress, it may be helpful if you can speak on behalf of your loved one. Here are some questions you may want to ask.

- ❖ How can I keep my loved one safe especially over the short term?
- ❖ How will I know if the problem is getting worse?
- ❖ Where can I get more information?
- ❖ What other supports are available for us?
- ❖ Would counselling be helpful? If so, how do we access it locally?
- ❖ Is there anything I need to know about these tablets, for example any side-effects (if your loved one is on prescribed medication)?
- ❖ What is the care plan for my loved one?
- ❖ In an emergency, who do I contact?
- ❖ My child is under 18, are there dedicated services for young people?



## Child protection and confidentiality

If a young person (under 18 years of age) presents with suicidal thoughts there is always a child welfare concern. A child welfare concern is defined as:

A problem experienced directly by a child, or by the family of a child, that is seen to impact negatively on the child's health, development and welfare, and that warrants assessment and support, but may or may not require a child protection response. Child Protection and Welfare Practice Handbook, HSE.

Risk of suicide needs to be communicated clearly between all parties involved and confidentiality should not be promised in this circumstance. No undertakings regarding secrecy can be given. Those working with a child and family should make this clear to all parties involved. Children First-National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children, 2011.

Similarly, if you are supporting an adult with dependent children, it is important to talk with them about the care and safety of their children.

## After a suicide attempt

After a suicide attempt, you may feel shocked that you did not 'see this coming' or you may feel guilty for not having noticed the signs. You may also feel anxious about how best to support your loved one now. These reactions are common and understandable, but it is important to know that there are things you can do to help, protect and support your loved one following a suicide attempt.

- ❖ Show that you are willing to hear about the pain that led to their suicide attempt. Create an atmosphere for listening if they want to talk ('I know at the moment you don't want to talk, but I'm here if you do').
- ❖ Encourage them to let someone know if they have thoughts of suicide any time in the future.
- ❖ Be involved in their care by encouraging and supporting them to attend appointments. If you continue to have concerns about them, get professional help.
- ❖ Model self-care. Instead of telling them what they should do to be healthier and happier, show them by your own behaviour healthy ways of living and coping with life's challenges.

## And finally...

Suicidal thoughts represent unbearable emotional pain, caused by a wide variety of problems. This is often a cry for help. People experiencing suicidal thoughts are often so distressed that they are unable to see other options that are available to them. Recognising the signs and taking steps to respond to someone who is in emotional distress can help to reduce their risk of suicide.

The only way to know for sure if someone is suicidal is to ask them. Do what you can and never leave anything to chance. Offer support and seek professional help. Know that there are things you can do to help, protect and support your loved one following a suicide attempt.

Most people do not want to die, but instead want to escape from and stop the pain they are feeling or the problems they are experiencing. For many, with understanding and support this is possible.

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## Other support services

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### Money and debt management

#### MABS

The Money and Budgeting Service (MABS) is a free, confidential service for people in debt or in danger of getting into debt. Advisers can give you advice and support on many money management and debt issues as well as free self-help materials.

MABS Helpline: 0761 07 2000  
(Monday to Friday, 9am to 8pm)

Local MABS offices:  
see [www.mabs.ie/contact-mabs](http://www.mabs.ie/contact-mabs)

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### General information and advice

#### CITIZENS INFORMATION SERVICE

The Citizens Information Service offers information on all aspects of public services and entitlements for people living in Ireland.

Information Phone Service:  
0761 07 4000  
(Monday to Friday, 9am to 8pm)  
Mortgage Arrears Information Helpline:  
0761 07 4050  
(Monday to Friday, 9.30am to 5pm)

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### General mental health support

#### AWARE

Aware is a national voluntary organisation providing support for depression. Aware provides face-to-face, phone and online support for people experiencing mild to moderate depression, as well as friends and families who are concerned for a loved one.

Helpline: 1890 303 302  
(Monday to Sunday, 10am to 10pm)  
Support email: [wecanhelp@aware.ie](mailto:wecanhelp@aware.ie)

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#### GROW

GROW is a mental health organisation which helps people who have suffered, or are suffering, from mental health problems.

Infoline: 1890 474 474

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#### MENTALHELP.IE

MentalHelp.ie is an online directory run by Mental Health Reform (MHR), the national coalition of organisations promoting improved mental health services. The directory includes information on helplines, websites, support groups, training, benefits, housing, inpatient care, counselling, complaints, advocacy, rights and recovery.

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## **MYMIND**

My Mind provides a range of community mental health services through about 50 mental health professionals, including an ‘e-psychology’ service. Online services include email exchange with health professionals and online counselling using Skype. My Mind supports more serious mental health difficulties face to face.

Phone: 076 680 1060

[www.mymind.org](http://www.mymind.org)

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## **NURTURE**

Nurture is an Irish charity offering timely and affordable professional counselling and support around pregnancy, childbirth, mental health and emotional wellbeing for women, their partners and families.

To arrange to talk to one of their counsellors, either phone or visit [nurturepnd.org/contact](http://nurturepnd.org/contact).

Phone: (01) 843 0930

Email: [admin@nurturepnd.org](mailto:admin@nurturepnd.org)

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## **SHINE**

Shine supports people with mental ill health and their families and friends with general information and a listening ear. Trained psychotherapists view and respond to emails within 24 hours, Monday to Friday. The service is confidential.

Information helpline: 1890 621 631  
(Monday to Friday, 9am to 4pm)

Email support: [phil@shineonline.ie](mailto:phil@shineonline.ie)

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## **TURN2ME**

Turn2Me provides peer support forums with a moderator, online support groups, access to Thought Catcher (a mood measuring tool) and one-to-one online counselling.

[www.turn2me.org](http://www.turn2me.org)

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## **3Ts SELF HELP eLIBRARY**

3Ts has produced a series of self-help booklets together with the National Health Service that are available to download for free and are intended as a ‘first step’ towards recovery across a range of mental health topics. Each booklet is 20 to 30 pages long and contains information, tips and techniques for coping with and managing a particular issue.

[www.3ts.ie](http://www.3ts.ie)

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## **Support for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people**

### **LGBT HELPLINE**

The LGBT helpline is a national support service providing confidential, non-judgmental, support and information to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people and their families and friends. The helpline is run by trained volunteers through a network of local centres.

Helpline: 1890 929 539

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### **LGBTMENTALHEALTH.IE**

Homophobia and transphobia can have a negative impact on the mental health of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people.

This website tells LGBT people how they can look after their mental health and highlights the services available if they need support.

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## **Abuse and domestic violence support**

### **AMEN**

AMEN provides a confidential helpline, support service and information to male victims of domestic abuse.

Helpline: 046 902 3718

(Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm)

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### **CHILDREN AT RISK IN IRELAND (CARI)**

This is a specialised, confidential national service for professionals seeking referral advice and parents who have either just learned that their child has suffered sexual abuse or are concerned about their child's sexualised behaviour.

Helpline: 1890 924 567

(Monday to Friday, 9.30am to 5.30pm)

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### **DUBLIN RAPE CRISIS CENTRE**

The Dublin Rape Crisis Centre is a national organisation offering a wide range of services to women and men affected by rape, sexual assault, sexual harassment or childhood sexual abuse. The services include a national 24-hour helpline, one-to-one counselling, court accompaniment, outreach services, training, awareness-raising and lobbying. To find a centre in your area, visit [www.drcc.ie/get-help-and-information/centres-around-ireland](http://www.drcc.ie/get-help-and-information/centres-around-ireland).

National helpline: 1800 77 88 88

(24 hours a day, 365 days a year)

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## **WOMEN'S AID**

Women's Aid is a voluntary organisation offering free and confidential support to women and their children who are experiencing domestic violence in the Republic of Ireland.

Free helpline: 1800 341 900 (10am to 10pm daily except Christmas Day)

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## **Advocacy support**

### **IRISH ADVOCACY NETWORK**

The Irish Advocacy Network has peer advocates in most HSE areas who regularly attend psychiatric units and day centres. Their main job is to give support and information to people with mental health difficulties by befriending them and offering a confidential listening ear or peer advocacy (support and or advice from people their own age).

Phone: 047 38918

E: [admin@irishadvocacynetwork.com](mailto:admin@irishadvocacynetwork.com)

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## **Bereavement support**

### **IRISH CHILDHOOD BEREAVEMENT NETWORK**

The Irish Childhood bereavement Network provides support to those working with grieving children and young people.

[www.childhoodbereavement.ie](http://www.childhoodbereavement.ie)

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## **YOU ARE NOT ALONE**

A directory of bereavement support services.

[www.hse.ie/eng/services/publications/Mentalhealth/NOSP\\_Bereavement\\_Support\\_Directory.pdf](http://www.hse.ie/eng/services/publications/Mentalhealth/NOSP_Bereavement_Support_Directory.pdf)

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## **Drug, alcohol and addiction support**

### **DRUGS.IE**

Drugs.ie provides Ireland's only online interactive information and support chat service. It also has a national database of treatment, rehabilitation, information, support, counselling, education and training services.

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### **HSE DRUGS AND ALCOHOL HELPLINE**

This helpline provides support, information, guidance and referral to anyone with a question or concern related to drug and alcohol use, and HIV and sexual health. The service is confidential, non-judgemental and offers space to talk about your situation, explore some options and consider your needs.

Helpline: 1800 459 459

(Monday to Friday, 9.30am and 5.30pm)

Email support: [helpline@hse.ie](mailto:helpline@hse.ie)

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## Support for eating disorders

### **BODYWHYS**

Bodywhys is the national eating disorder association of Ireland. It provides a variety of supports for people affected by eating disorders including online support groups and face to face support groups in Dublin, Carlow and Sligo.

National helpline: 1890 200 444

Email support: [alex@bodywhys.ie](mailto:alex@bodywhys.ie)

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## Legal aid

### **FLAC**

FLAC is an independent legal rights organisation offering basic legal information and advice to the public.

Information and referral line:

1890 350 250

(Monday to Thursday, 9am to 5:30pm and Friday, 9am to 5pm)

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## Support for children and young people

### **CHILDLINE**

Childline provides a free, confidential listening service to children and young people up to the age of 18.

Free helpline: 1800 666 666

(24 hours a day, 365 days a year)

Online Chat: [www.childline.ie](http://www.childline.ie)

(10am - 10pm, 365 days a year)

Teentxt service:

text the word "Talk" to 50101

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### **RAINBOWS IRELAND**

Rainbows Ireland supports children and young people experiencing loss as a result of bereavement, parental separation and divorce. This support is provided in small groups of similar age and loss experience over 12 weeks. The programme is available in primary and secondary schools, family resource centres, diocesan centres, and youth projects. It is a free service to children and young people.

[www.rainbowsireland.ie/where-is-rainbows](http://www.rainbowsireland.ie/where-is-rainbows)

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### **REACHOUT.COM**

ReachOut.com helps young people get through tough times by providing quality mental health information and covering issues that affect mental health.

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### **SPUNOUT.IE**

This website provides health information for young people on mental health, sexual health, exam stress and general lifestyle. SpunOut also has an extensive online directory of supports and services in local areas.

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## **TEEN BETWEEN**

Teen Between is a specialised support service for teenagers whose parents are going through a divorce or separation. It can also help young adults who have experienced their parent's separation during their teenage years.

Helpline: 1800 303 191  
(Monday to Friday, 3.30pm to 8.30pm and Saturdays, 10am to 2.30pm)

Email: [teenbetween@relationshipsireland.com](mailto:teenbetween@relationshipsireland.com)

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## **Family and parent support**

### **CHILDREN IN HOSPITAL IRELAND**

Children in Hospital Ireland (CHI) is a voluntary organisation that promotes the welfare of children in hospital and their families.

Information line: LoCall 1890 25 26 82  
Email: [info@childreninhospital.ie](mailto:info@childreninhospital.ie)

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### **ONE FAMILY**

One Family provides a national helpline for members of one-parent families and those who share parenting, their families and friends, and professionals working with them.

Helpline: 1890 662 212 (Helpline hours are listed on the One Family website) [www.onefamily.ie](http://www.onefamily.ie)  
Email: [support@onefamily.ie](mailto:support@onefamily.ie)

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## **PARENTLINE**

Parentline provides a confidential helpline for parents and guardians with support, guidance and information on all aspects of being a parent.

Helpline: LoCall 1890 92 72 77  
(Monday to Thursday, 10am to 9.30pm and Friday, 10am to 4.30pm)

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## **REACHOUTPARENTS.COM**

This website provides reliable information for parents about how to support their children's mental health and well-being.

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## **RELATIONSHIPS IRELAND**

Services include relationship counselling, sex therapy, marriage preparation courses, training courses for professionals, and affordable courses for individuals and couples.

Support services: 1890 380 380  
Email: [info@relationshipsireland.com](mailto:info@relationshipsireland.com)  
Online live help:  
[www.relationshipsireland.com](http://www.relationshipsireland.com)

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## **Support for older people**

### **SENIOR HELPLINE**

Senior Help Line is a confidential listening service for older people by trained older volunteers.

Helpline: LoCall 1850 440 444  
(Every day, 10am to 10pm)

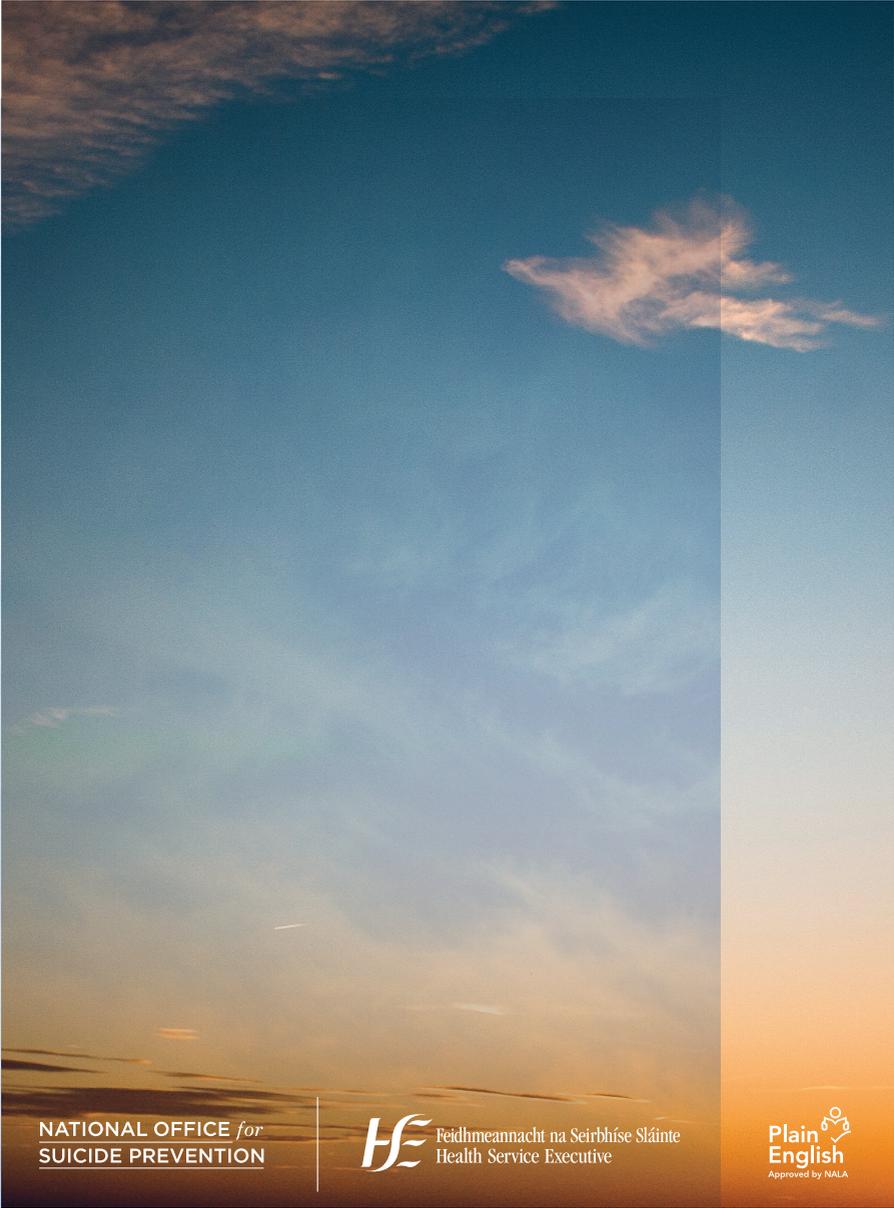
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**NATIONAL OFFICE *for***  
**SUICIDE PREVENTION**



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte  
Health Service Executive

**Plain  
English**  
Approved by NALA

**National Office for Suicide Prevention**  
Mental Health Division, Health Service Executive,  
Stewart's Hospital, Palmerstown, Dublin 20.  
Phone: +353 (0)1 620 1670.  
[www.nosp.ie](http://www.nosp.ie)