

copling with suicidal thoughts



Do you feel like hurting yourself or ending your life? These feelings may not last forever. **There are people who can support you to get through this and steps you can take to stop yourself from acting on these thoughts.**

IMMEDIATE SUPPORT FOR YOURSELF

1. TELL SOMEONE HOW YOU ARE FEELING

Reach out to someone you trust and tell them how you are feeling. This could be a friend/family member, a suicide prevention helpline or a support group.

2. STRATEGIES YOU CAN USE TO MANAGE YOUR THOUGHTS OR FEELINGS IN THE MOMENT

Refer to your safety plan:

Refer to your safety plan, if you have one, to identify contact details of loved ones or support services and steps for keeping yourself safe.

Remove access: Remove access to anything you could use to harm yourself. If you're in an unsafe place, move to a safer place, if you can.

Identify reasons to live: Identify people or things such as an object, a photograph, a letter, etc., which are important to you to remind you of hope for the future or reasons to live.

Distract yourself: Think of any way that can take your mind away from your current thoughts of suicide.

TO DISTRACT YOURSELF:

You can try techniques like taking a cold shower/bath, going for a walk outside, holding an ice cube until it melts, or tearing a paper.

Take time to think about three things that you can smell, taste, touch, hear and see to ground your thoughts.

Breathe in for 4 seconds, hold your breath for 7 seconds and exhale for 8 seconds. Repeat this until you feel calmer.

SELF-MANAGEMENT FOR THE LONGER TERM

1. IDENTIFY THE RIGHT SUPPORT

Reach out to family/friends:

Think about someone you can trust and has shown you support in the past. It can be difficult to open up about your feelings, but by talking to a trusted person,

ONCE YOU DECIDE TO TALK:

1. Think about it as just another conversation. You can decide what and how much you want to share.
2. You can ask for the kind of support that you need.
3. Know that people might react in different ways and take time to understand what you are going through.
4. Know that the person may need to call in for extra help to ensure your safety.

you can find the support you need to cope with these feelings.

Visit a health professional (such as a doctor, therapist, or counselor): They will listen to you and help you understand why you're experiencing feelings and thoughts of suicide. A psychiatrist or doctor may also prescribe medication to ease your symptoms after assessing your situation.

Call a telephone helpline/ counseling services:

This could be a good way of getting information or support when you need it. Talking to someone on the telephone can also be helpful if you are finding it difficult to open up to the people you know or speak to someone face-to-face.

Reach out to a peer support group:

This could be another helpful space to share your thoughts and learn tips for coping better from others who may be going through similar experiences. It can help you feel less alone.

2. MAKE A SAFETY PLAN

A safety plan is a step-by-step plan for times when you may be thinking about suicide. It will help you navigate your suicidal feelings and urges at the time of crisis. It can include your warning signs, coping strategies, contact

details of loved ones or support services, and steps for keeping yourself safe. You can prepare a plan on your own or with the help of a friend, a family member or a health professional.

3. LEARN NEW COPING METHODS

Identify your triggers

Triggers are situations, places, or people who cause emotional distress. Writing about your thoughts and feelings in a diary can help you identify triggers that might be causing you to feel low/suicidal. If it's not possible to entirely avoid the trigger, you could have a plan of action for looking after yourself. For example, if you experience thoughts of suicide after a peer or loved one makes negative comments about your choices or identity, you can work towards limiting your interactions with them.

Recognise what is in your control and what isn't

Sometimes we worry about things that we can neither control nor change. It can leave us feeling anxious or stressed. It is important to recognize what you can or cannot control. It might not change the situation, but it will help you manage your thoughts and feelings.

Make a hope box

A hope box is anything that lifts your mood and reminds you why life is worth living. It is helpful when you're feeling low/empty/without hope. It can contain anything, for example, a bucket list (list of things you wish to do),

notes for yourself, photographs, letters, important phone numbers, a list of things you're grateful for, etc. It can also be a virtual collection of things that make you feel better like songs, photographs, videos, etc.

Work with a mental health professional (like a counselor, a therapist, or a psychiatrist)

A mental health professional will help you understand why you may be experiencing suicidal feelings and think about ways to help yourself cope with and resolve these feelings.

4. PRACTICE REGULAR CARE FOR YOUR PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH

Build and follow a daily routine

which can include maintaining regular bedtimes to get enough sleep, taking care of your hygiene, eating healthy meals, and exercising regularly.

Schedule daily activities that bring you small pleasures

for example, watching a movie, listening to music, dancing, etc.

Practice relaxation by taking some time out to relax and soothe the body to take care of your mind. You could practice deep breathing, follow guided meditation, do simple stretches, or listen to music.

Stay connected to people who care about you to prevent isolation. Talk to them and let them know that you're finding things difficult. Small, everyday topics to talk about can also make you feel more connected.

(Outlive is a suicide prevention programme for young people by Sangath, The Centre for Mental Health Law & Policy, and Quicksand. Learn more at www.outlive.in.)

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