

WBSA

Addressing Suicidal Thoughts & Feelings

Introduction:

Anyone involved in the WBSA could be affected by suicide. A young person might experience suicidal thoughts and feelings themselves or they may be affected if someone they know has died by suicide.

People involved in sport and activity can help by:

- Recognising the risk factors.
- Learning how to talk with a young person in crisis.
- Referring to support services.

Healthy environment:

WBSA aim to create a healthy environment where it is understood that everyone needs to look after their mental health and wellbeing in the same way that we look after our physical health.

Risk signs:

Young people experiencing suicidal thoughts and feelings might display changes in behaviour, physical appearance or in performance. Some of these changes might include:

- Becoming isolated or dropping out of activities.
- Seeming confused or distracted and unable to complete tasks they usually would with ease.
- A sudden halt in performance development.
- Neglecting their appearance, including personal hygiene or clothing.
- Persistent physical complaints, like chronic pain.
- Sudden or extreme weight loss or weight gain.
- Acts of self-harm.
- Feelings of hopelessness.
- Feeling like a failure and being very self-critical.
- Decreased interest in making plans for the future.

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- A previous suicide attempt.

If you recognise any of these behaviours, it's important to create a safe space for young people to talk. Try to make time during practices or sessions and let young people know that you're available to listen.

Support using ALGEE:

ALGEE is a five-step action plan from Mental Health First Aid England to support you in helping someone who may be in crisis.

1. ASSESS for risk of suicide or harm

When helping a person going through a mental health crisis, it is important to look for signs of suicidal thoughts and behaviours or harm. Some warning signs include:

- Threatening to hurt or kill themselves.
- Seeking access to means to hurt or kill themselves.
- Talking or writing about death, dying or suicide.
- Feeling hopeless.
- Acting recklessly or engaging in risky activities.
- Increased use of alcohol or drugs.
- Withdrawing from family, friends or the group.
- Appearing angry or agitated.
- Having a dramatic change in mood.

If you believe someone may be actively suicidal contact emergency services immediately on 999

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2. LISTEN nonjudgmentally

It may seem simple, but the ability to listen and have a meaningful conversation requires skill and patience. Listening is critical in helping a young person feel respected, accepted and understood.

Use your verbal and nonverbal skills, such as open body posture and comfortable eye contact to engage in appropriate conversation. Be compassionate and try to empathise with their situation.

3. GIVE reassurance and Information

It is important to recognise that mental health problems and addictions are real, treatable illnesses from which people can and do recover.

When talking to someone you believe may be experiencing symptoms of a mental health problem, approach the conversation with respect and dignity and don't blame the individual for his or her symptoms. Look at further information about mental health problems and familiarise yourself with the services that offer information to young people.

4. ENCOURAGE appropriate professional help

There are many professionals who can offer help when someone is in crisis or may be experiencing the signs and symptoms of a mental health problem.

People who can help include:

- Doctors - GPs and psychiatrists.
- NHS Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).
- Social workers.
- Counsellors and other mental health practitioners.
- Specialist charities - such as Mind and Rethink.

Types of professional help:

- Talking therapies such as cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) and psychotherapy.
- Medication.
- Other professional supports such as mentoring or advocacy.

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5. ENCOURAGE self-help and other support strategies

There are many ways individuals experiencing mental health problems can contribute to their own recovery and wellbeing through:

- Maintaining physical wellbeing through exercise, balanced diet and sleep.
- Mindfulness.
- Relaxation and Meditation.
- Participating in peer support groups.
- Engaging with family, friends, sports clubs, faith and other social networks.

How we talk about suicide:

It's important that we are mindful of the words we use when we talk about suicide.

Phrases to Use:

- Die by/death by suicide
- A suicide
- Take one's own life
- Person at risk of suicide
- Suicide attempt
- A completed suicide

Phrases to Avoid:

- Commit suicide
- Cry for help
- Successful or unsuccessful suicide attempt
- Suicide victim
- Suicide epidemic or craze
- Suicide hot spot
- Suicide-prone
- Suicide tourist
- Doing something silly

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Support & Resources:

Childline

Information and support for young people on a range of issues.

Tel: 0800 11 11

[Childline | Childline](#)

Beat

Advice and support about eating disorders.

Tel: 0300 123 3355

[The UK's Eating Disorder Charity - Beat \(beateatingdisorders.org.uk\)](http://beateatingdisorders.org.uk)

Mind

Advice for helping yourself during feelings of intense urges

[Treatment and support for self-harm - Mind](#)

Samaritans

24-hour confidential listening and support for anyone who needs it

Tel: 116 123

<https://www.samaritans.org/>

State of mind

Mental health support for sportspeople and supporter groups

[State of Mind – A charity that harnesses the power of sport \(stateofmindsport.org\)](http://stateofmindsport.org)

The Mix

Support for people under 25 on a range of issues Tel:

0808 808 4994

themix.org.uk

Young Minds

No Harm Done — Things can change, information for young people

[Self-Harm & Mental Health | Guide For Parents | YoungMinds](#)

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For those working with young people:

NSPCC helpline

Help, advice and support for professionals with concerns about a child
0808 800 5000
nspcc.org.uk/what-you-can-do

English Institute of Sport

Works with elite athletes to improve sporting performance and athlete wellbeing
[UK Sports Institute: Sport Performance Support Services](#)

Mind — Sport, activity, mental health pages

Information on mental health, awareness training and advice
[Sport, physical activity and mental health - Mind](#)

Rethink

Information and advice on mental health as well as local support services
0300 500 0927
[Rethink Mental Illness](#)

Zero Suicide Alliance

A collaboration of NHS trusts, businesses and individuals committed to suicide prevention
<https://www.zerosuicidealliance.com/>

References:

Mental Health First Aid England - [Mental health training online and face to face](#) · [MHFA England](#)

Zero Suicide Alliance website - [zerosuicidealliance.com](https://www.zerosuicidealliance.com/)

Mind - <https://www.mind.org.uk>



Andy Rogers
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WBSA Safeguarding Officer

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