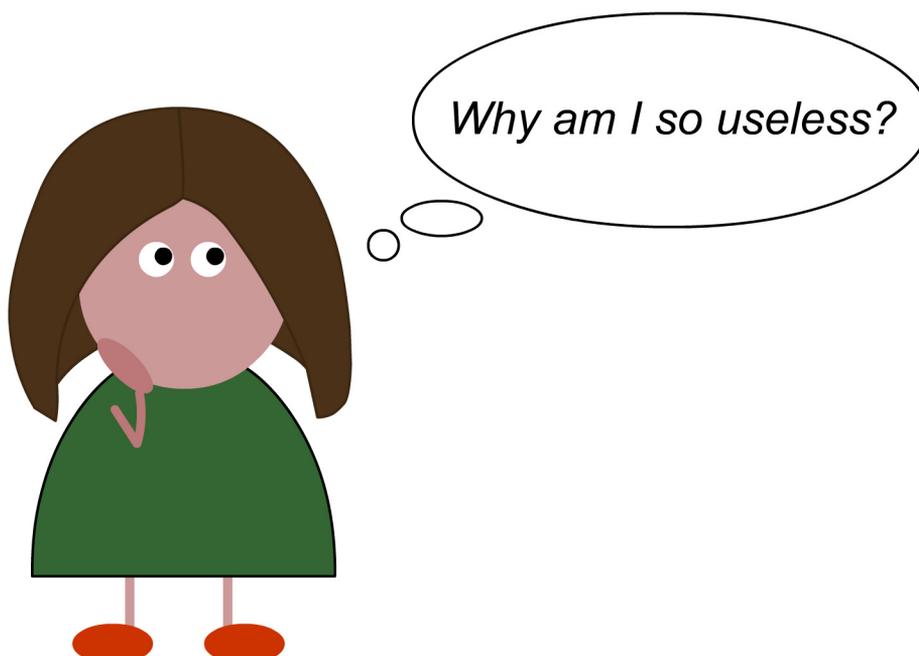


What Is Suicide?

Suicide is, to most people, a taboo subject. Nobody likes to talk about it. Yet many people have either contemplated or attempted suicide or know of someone who has considered taking their own life. When we consider the basic survival instincts of most humans, it is hard to imagine what could drive a person to want to end their own life. How does someone reach the stage where living is no longer an option? What happened to them to make them feel this way?

Suicide is a devastating public health issue. It wreaks despair and helplessness within families and communities and is one of the most difficult events to deal with. Historically, it has been a difficult matter to discuss because of the sensitive nature of the subject. However, it must be discussed. Suicide isn't "someone else's problem", but it is "everyone's problem", we are all involved and affected by suicide.

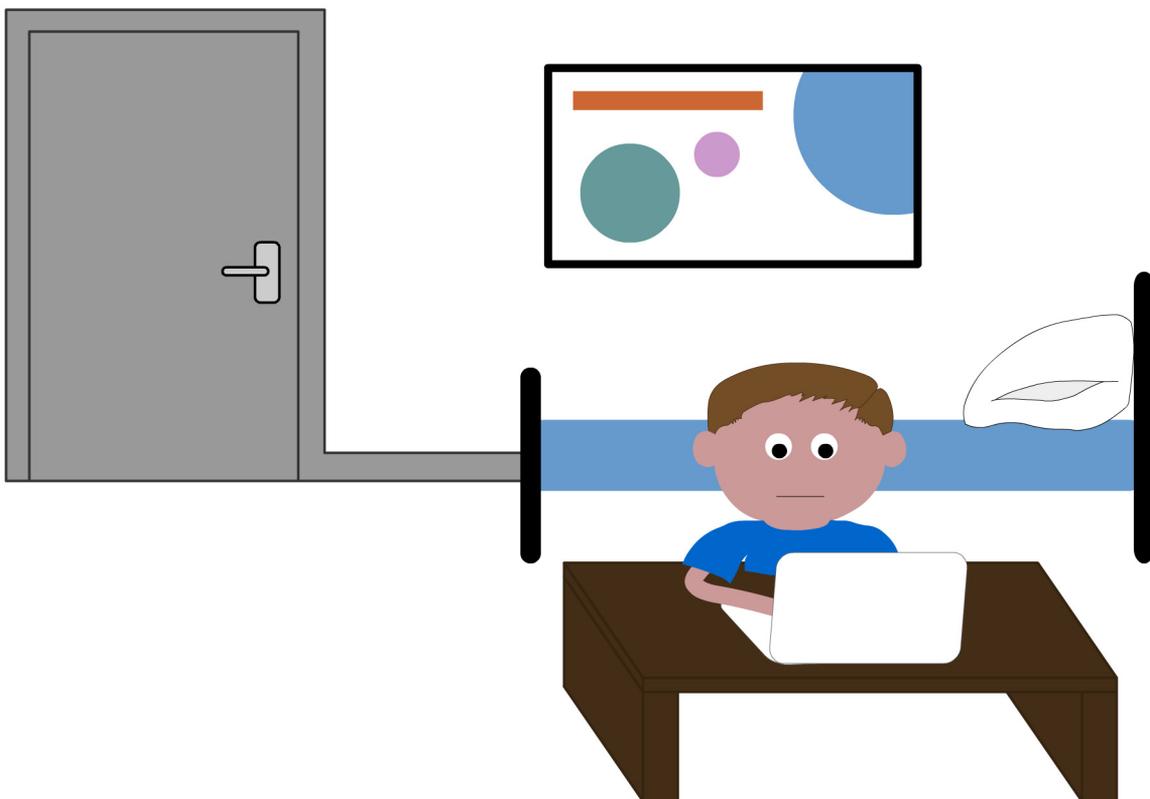
For many of us, life can be a constant struggle. However, we all manage to cope with the day to day problems that are common to us all. When someone is feeling suicidal, the trials of life can make them feel defeated, crushed and disappointed. Even trivial things can cause great anguish and worry—and it can be difficult for the rest of us to understand this. Things can get so bad that they start to think of their options—and death may be one of them. The trouble with thinking about suicide even once is that, once the idea settles in the mind, the thought can come back again. For someone who has considered suicide in the past, when they are aware of the first sign of trouble, their mind immediately flips into "ending it all" mode. They become convinced that the world would be better off without them and they may start to plot ways they can carry out their plan.



Reasons For Suicide

The causes of suicide are many and complex, and it is not possible to identify a specific set of reasons behind all youth suicides. We know that young people have always had to cope with a variety of pressures, but young people today are facing new types of stressful situations—ones which were not an issue in the past.

One such pressure is social networking. It is a relatively new phenomenon and young people today are growing up in a world where instant information is available at the touch of a button. People today are faced with information overload and not all this information is true, helpful or healthy.



Social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter are growing in popularity and almost all young people have accounts with these websites. But recent studies have discovered that excessive use of social media can lead to anxiety and depression. Young people feel the need to create an online persona—they want to be seen to be popular people with busy lives. They spend much of their time updating their statuses or checking the status of others. In a way, they are being forced to brand and sell themselves online which is putting tremendous strain on them. And the fact that young people now communicate online rather than face-to-face can lead to isolation and loneliness.

The Warning Signs Of Suicide

“I don’t want to live anymore.” What would you do if you heard someone say these words? Would you know how to respond to them? Would you know what to do to help them?

Even though such expressions may indicate that someone is suicidal, what they are actually saying is: “I don’t want to feel like this any longer. I want this terrible pain to go away. I want to feel that life is worth living.”

One of the most devastating aspects of suicide is the feeling of helplessness felt by family and friends. Could I have done something to prevent this tragedy? What were the signs that something was wrong? Should I have realised he/she was feeling this way? Why didn’t he/she talk to me?

The truth is there is no special type of person that commits suicide. There may be trends, but it can happen to anyone. However there are signs that someone is thinking of committing suicide. One of the obvious signs is if they have made a suicide attempt already. People who have tried to end their lives before are significantly more likely to eventually die by suicide than the rest of the population. It will therefore be important to keep an eye on such ones and look out for any visible warning signs that they are feeling suicidal again.

One important point—sometimes a person may attempt suicide without any warning at all. The warning signs outlined here are personal and individual and it is perfectly understandable if some or all of them are missed by friends and family. Nobody should blame themselves for not noticing the signs when a loved one dies by suicide. However, research has shown that there are definite signals attached to many suicide attempts that we can all look out for and which may help us prevent a suicide and these are outlined below:

Feelings Of Pessimism

One of the main signs that someone is feeling suicidal is their feeling of overwhelming hopelessness. They may speak of feeling irritable, unlovable, anxious and overly sad. They may also feel humiliated, lack self-esteem, and have little or no confidence. You will notice a loss of interest in activities and hobbies they once enjoyed, and they may describe feelings of worthlessness and pessimism. They may become withdrawn or isolated and it can be difficult for them to communicate their feelings of dread to anyone else. Everything appears bleak and every thought is agonisingly distressing. They may become withdrawn and indecisive and because they are constantly expecting the worst to happen, they may not be able to