



Suicide

Unfortunately sometimes a person can feel so overwhelmed and helpless about life and what's going on, that they may not care about themselves and they think suicide is the only way out. Depression is a major risk factor for suicide but keep in mind that there are many other risk factors that can also lead to someone thinking about suicide. These factors can include high levels of anxiety, unemployment, and problems with the law, anger, social or economic disadvantage just to name a few.

Sometimes suicide occurs impulsively, in a moment of feeling desperately upset. However, most of the time, it is a long term cycle for that person, trying to question whether they should go through with it or not. Even the pain of going through that cycle can become too much to cope. Suicidal thoughts don't just come from nowhere. They are a response to various emotions which can include feelings of loneliness, depression, fear, despair, hurt, sadness, anger, guilt, shame, grief, confusion, helplessness and hopelessness.

So what are some risk factors?

As mentioned earlier there are a number of suicide risk factors that we must look out for and these can include:

- Substance Use
- Depression
- Age
- Grief and Loss
- Previous attempt
- Unemployment
- Problems with the law
- Family disruption
- Relationship breakdown
- Social & Economic disruption

So what are some warning signs?

- Irrational or strange behaviour
- Feeling hopeless or helpless
- Eating & sleeping habits change
- Maybe a sudden change in personality
- Lack of interest in day to day activities or in the future
- Attempting to give away their possessions
- Actually stating that this is what they want to do

What to do if a person is suicidal

- Take the person very seriously
- Ensure the person is not left alone. If you think that they are at a point where this could happen make sure you stay with them
- Get professional help straight away. This can include calling 000, taking them to a local doctor or hospital, or taking them to a local Mental health service.
- Talk to the person about how they might be feeling, but remember to listen without judging
- Remember to help the person understand that things can get better and that there is always help available to get them through these feelings and times.

Where can I go for help?

Sometimes we face events in our lives that we are unable to handle ourselves or with help of family and friends and sometimes there are situations in our lives that might be too much for us to cope with. In these cases, there are options out there for you to take.

Some of these options can include:

- Counselling (Someone to yarn too)
- Behavioural and Lifestyle changes (Health Choices)
- See a doctor who might give you medication that can help

If you just want to have a yarn or if you would like to find out more information contact any of your local Community Mental Health or other services listed below.

The Aboriginal Social & Emotional Wellbeing Fact Sheet Series was designed by the Aboriginal Social & Emotional Wellbeing workers David Freeman & Brenda Freeman based at Campbelltown Community Mental Health Service February 2009.

The information provided was adapted from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mental Health First Aid Training Manual and the SANE Australia website. www.sane.org