

REACH OUT

STAY S.T.R.O.N.G

SHINING A LIGHT ON
SUICIDE

LGBT FOUNDATION



A guide for LGBTQ+ people experiencing suicidal thoughts.
How to recognise risk, reclaim control and reach out for support.

**WE'RE
HERE
IF YOU
NEED US**

lgbt.foundation

0345 3 30 30 30

CONTENT WARNING

**This resource contains issues of
suicide and self-harm.**

**Please do not read if you think this
might be triggering or harmful to you.**

**If you feel you may not be safe, or are
at risk of not being safe, call 999 or
go to your local A&E for emergency
support.**

Lots of people think about suicide at some point in their lives. If you were in physical pain, you would look for a way to stop that pain. You might take some painkillers, or maybe you would talk to a doctor about it. If you're in a lot of emotional pain, it's natural that you would also look for a way to stop that pain.

Some people might have suicidal thoughts because they can't see another way out of their current situation. Thinking about death can be scary for some people, but it can also be comforting. It can feel like a relief to know you have the option of a way out, even if you won't use it.

**ANYBODY CAN EXPERIENCE
SUICIDAL THOUGHTS,
SO REACH OUT AND GET THE
SUPPORT YOU NEED**



STAY S.T.R.O.N.G!

When you're experiencing suicidal thoughts, it can be really difficult to think about things clearly. Here are 7 ways you can stay S.T.R.O.N.G whilst feeling suicidal.

S. Self-awareness

You are the expert in your experiences. Can you identify any changes or differences in your behaviour that may help you work out when you are feeling suicidal?

T. Triggers

Is there anything that increases the intensity of the thoughts you are having? If possible, make a note of these and try to avoid them, or share the information with somebody you trust.

R. Resilience

You may have experienced these thoughts for a while, what has helped you get this far? This may be things like your hobbies, partner, animals, friends, family, and your ambitions.

O. Open up

If you feel comfortable, try to speak to somebody you trust. This may be a professional but may also be somebody in your personal support network. Let somebody know how you are feeling.

N. Never alone

You may feel like you are on your own with the thoughts, but around 3 in 4 LGBT people accessing LGBT services have experienced suicidal thoughts before. We are here if you need us.

G. Get support

There is plenty of support available to help you when you are experiencing suicidal thoughts. You can reach out to anonymous helplines, use websites such as [Shining a Light on Suicide](#), or speak to your GP. If you are experiencing crisis, you can phone 999 for immediate support.



RECOGNISE YOUR RISK

Like depression, suicidal thoughts can present differently in different people. You may have had suicidal thoughts for most of your life, becoming more or less intense depending on what's going on for you. Or they may have started after a traumatic event or a period of mental ill health. They can change over time in frequency and intensity.

Suicidal thoughts aren't always as easy to identify as you might think, as you may not be thinking about death itself. While many people have thoughts that they would be better off dead, or that they do not want to be alive, for others these thoughts may be more along the lines of "I just want it all to stop", or "I can't

cope anymore". Check in with yourself when you are having distressing thoughts of any kind, and consider other physical symptoms.

KNOW YOUR SYMPTOMS

Some common symptoms include:

- Finding it very hard to perform day to day tasks
- Lethargy
- Self-harm
- Withdrawing/isolating yourself
- Feeling very numb or disconnected
- Muscle pain/tension
- Stomach upsets
- Trouble sleeping
- Loss of appetite



TRACK YOUR THOUGHTS

A useful tool for tracking your thoughts is this chart:

Never or rarely think about suicide

Sometimes think about suicide but have no intention or plan to carry it out

Often think about suicide, considered a plan but no intent to carry it out

Frequently thinking about suicide and have begun to consider a plan of how and when to carry it out

Current intention to end own life and plan of how to do so

If you are in the **Blue zone**, you should seek mental health support straight away.

If you are in the **Pink–red area**, you can monitor your suicidal thoughts to ensure you are not

moving into the blue zone. You may also wish to use some of the information throughout this booklet to help you manage your thoughts and feelings and get the right support.

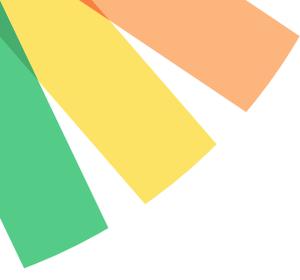
IDENTIFY YOUR TRIGGERS

Suicidal thoughts can often start with triggers or increase due to triggers. It can be helpful to identify these to support you in protecting yourself. Some people find it hard to identify triggers. For others, they may be aware of many triggers. It is important to note that not all triggers can be avoided, for example your work environment, but you may be able to put some plans in place to manage the impact of these.

Some examples of triggers can be low mood, isolation, relationship issues, substance misuse, certain areas, certain

situations, and other items such as social media. As you can imagine, this list does not cover all triggers but may help you start thinking about your own triggers.

When you isolate examples of triggers, you can work on either reducing and removing them from your life, or taking appropriate care of yourself when you do have to engage with them. For example, if being around a certain family member makes you feel suicidal, you might arrange to visit a good friend afterwards who will cheer you up and keep you safe.



REDUCING RISK

If you have thought about how you might carry out suicide, another way of reducing your risk is to remove or avoid things or situations which could increase the risk to you following through on these plans.

If your thoughts are more intense at a certain time of day, could you arrange to have a friend or family member check in with you at that time -or alternatively, make sure you schedule something to do at that time?



RECLAIM CONTROL

Tips to help you cope:

Feeling suicidal doesn't mean you're losing control of your life. It can be scary to think so frequently about your own death, or to feel helpless so often. However, the best way to keep yourself safe is actually to engage with these thoughts.

When you have suicidal thoughts, **take note of how you're feeling** – physically and emotionally – and what has been happening that day. This can help you to identify your triggers, and the next time you come across one of those triggers, you can be prepared. Make use of your identified **coping mechanisms** such as reading, gaming, going for a walk, or other things that make you feel good or change your focus

Create your own safety plan. This would include things that triggers the thoughts or increase their intensity (being alone, alcohol etc.), different coping strategies that work for you, and a list of people that you can contact if you need support including those around you and professional services.

Create a comfort box which includes items that ground, calm, and soothe you. Here are some examples of things to include:

- Blankets or weighted blankets
- Fidget toys and stress balls
- Photos and other items with happy or positive memories attached

- Scented items like candles or aromatherapy oils
- Soothing music or noise cancelling headphones
- Calming and distracting activities like colouring books

Acknowledging your suicidal thoughts also means **getting help** for them if necessary. It's hard to tell someone that you're thinking about suicide, but healthcare professionals will have heard it before and will be able to talk with you about long-term support, whether that is counselling or medication.

**42% OF LGBT
PEOPLE SAID THEY
FELT AT SOME POINT
OVER THE LAST YEAR
THAT LIFE WAS NOT
WORTH LIVING.**

(STONEWALL, 2018)





REACH OUT FOR SUPPORT

Reaching out for support can be hard, and especially when you're having suicidal thoughts. But recognising the signs of crisis and reaching out to talk about your feelings is one of the best ways to help you get through it.

Reach out to friends or family

Telling your friend or family member that you are struggling with suicidal thoughts may seem scary, or you may be worried about how they'll react.

Remember you don't need to know what you need to reach out for support. That said, it may help your friend or family member to support you if they know what would benefit you most at that time.

You may just need someone to know that you're in pain, or some company. Or maybe they could help you with something practical, like picking up your medication prescription, or doing some laundry for you.

Being as open and honest can help those around you to give you the best form of support, but make sure you feel comfortable and safe with those you share with.

Reach out to your GP

You can explore your options for support further with your GP. Depending on the situation, they may suggest you try medication, or they may want to make a referral for you to get more specialist support such as counselling. They may recommend you try both. Remember though, you get a say in the treatment and support you receive.

If you're worried you won't be able to tell them what you need to, consider making some notes beforehand. Healthcare appointments can be nerve-wrecking, so having notes to fall back on can be a big help, especially if you forget things when you're nervous or have trouble advocating for yourself. If you have been keeping track of your moods, you might also like to bring this along so that your GP can see how long you have been feeling this way.

Reach out to emergency services

If you feel you may not be safe, or are at risk of not being safe, call 999 or go to your local A&E for emergency support.

Reach out to a helpline

You might not want to worry the people in your life, or maybe you have tried to reach out to someone in the past and didn't get good a reaction. Reaching out to a helpline is a good option if you don't want to talk to someone you know, or don't feel able to.

There are various ways to reach out to a helpline. It doesn't have to be over the phone - there are also helplines which allow you to reach out through online chat, email, or text. You can talk anonymously if you want to.



General Manchester Mental Health Services (Out of hours)

Mon-Fri 5pm - 9am

Sat-Sun 24 hours a day

**Bolton, Salford and Trafford:
01204 483 071**

**City of Manchester:
0161 271 0450**

Samaritans

**Confidential emotional support
by call or email**

116 123 (free, 24/7 access)

**0330 094 5717 for Manchester
and Salford Samaritans (local
charges apply)**

**[www.samaritans.org/branches/
manchester-and-
salfordsamaritans](http://www.samaritans.org/branches/manchester-and-salfordsamaritans)**

Papyrus

**For children and young people
under 35 who are having
thoughts of suicide**

**0800 068 41 41 / 07860 039 967
www.papyrus-uk.org**

Saneline

**Emotional support and
information to those affected by
mental illness.**

0300 304 7000

**[www.sane.org.uk/what_we_do/
support/helpline](http://www.sane.org.uk/what_we_do/support/helpline)**

SHOUT

**UK's first 24/7 text support
service, free on all major mobile
networks.**

85258 (text only)

www.giveusashout.org

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Shining A Light On Suicide

www.shiningalightonsuicide.org.uk

“We’re bringing suicide out of the dark in Greater Manchester because it affects us all. Whether you’re feeling suicidal, worried someone else is, or have lost someone to suicide, you’re not alone. Whatever you’re going through, we’ll help you get the advice and support you need.”

Greater Manchester Bereavement Service

<https://greater-manchester-bereavementservice.org.uk/>

Grassroots

<https://www.prevent-suicide.org.uk/find-help-now>

Stay Alive (app)

<https://www.prevent-suicide.org.uk/find-helpnow/stay-alive-app>

Togetherall

<https://togetherall.com>

WRAP (Wellness Recovery Action Plan) app

<https://mentalhealthrecovery.com/wrapapp/>

**WE BELIEVE
IN A WORLD
WHERE QUEER
LIBERATION
ENABLES
MEANINGFUL AND
LASTING CHANGE.**

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