

# ARE YOU WORRIED SOMEONE IS THINKING OF SUICIDE?

Many people may be experiencing increased feelings of worry, anxiety or sadness as the world tries to respond to COVID-19. Some people you know may be having thoughts or feelings about suicide. They might be feeling anxious, worried for their health (or the health of their whānau and friends), or struggling to cope with uncertainty about when things will go back to 'normal.'

People who feel suicidal often feel they are alone and their family, whānau and friends would be better off without them. Support from people who care about them, and connection with their own sense of culture, identity and purpose, can help them to find a way through.

If you're worried about someone, reach out to them. Trust your gut and get in touch if you're concerned. Pick up the phone, send a text, contact them via social media and find out if they're okay. Even if they are not living in your home or mirumiru/bubble, find ways to connect with them. Let them know you're there and always will be.



**NEED TO TALK? FREE CALL OR TEXT 1737 TO CHAT WITH A TRAINED COUNSELLOR. IT'S CONFIDENTIAL AND THEY ARE AVAILABLE AT ANY TIME.**

If you're worried they may be thinking about suicide don't be afraid to ask them directly. If someone says they are having thoughts or feelings about suicide, it's important to take them seriously.

## SIGNS TO LOOK FOR

While it can be tough to check in on someone when we're in self-isolation, there are some signs you might notice. These include:

- Changes to the way they talk (either over the phone, in person if they're in your mirumiru/bubble, or online).
- Changes to how often they communicate with you or post on social media.
- Talking or writing about suicide, or wanting to die.
- Accessing things they could use to harm themselves.
- Sudden changes in mood.

A person who is thinking about suicide might not ask for help, but that doesn't mean that help isn't wanted. They might feel whakamā or ashamed of how they're feeling, like they don't deserve help, or like no-one can help them. Lots of people feel suicidal at some time in their lives. It can feel impossible to have hope that things will get better.

Ask them directly about their thoughts of suicide and what they are planning. If they have a specific plan, they need help right away.

**IF YOU'RE WORRIED ABOUT THEIR IMMEDIATE SAFETY, CALL YOUR LOCAL MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS ASSESSMENT TEAM. IF THEY ARE AN IMMEDIATE PHYSICAL DANGER TO THEMSELVES OR OTHERS, CALL 111.**

**Remember:** āwhinatia (helping or assisting) and manaakitia (showing compassion) are important qualities for korero tahitia (listening and talking together). Give your time, words, presence and patience – even if you can't do it in person, connecting with others is really important.



## WAYS TO SUPPORT SOMEONE

You can support someone by:

- Asking them if they would like to talk about what's going on for them with you or someone else. They might not want to open up straight away, but letting them know you are there for them is a big help.
- Checking on them regularly.
- Trying to stay calm, positive and hopeful that things can get better.
- Listening with compassion and without judgement.
- If they are comforted by prayer or karakia, invite them to pray with you.
- Help them to find and access the support they need from people they trust: friends, family, kaumātua, faith, community or cultural leaders, or professionals.
- Support them to access professional help, like a doctor or counsellor, as soon as possible. Although we are practising physical distancing right now, GPs, counsellors and health professionals are still available via phone and/or the internet.
- You don't need to have all the answers, or to offer advice. The best thing you can do is be there and listen.

## LOOK AFTER YOUR OWN WELLBEING

Supporting someone when they're suicidal can be really difficult. Remember to look after yourself, too.

- Make sure you're getting enough sleep, eating properly and relaxing.
- Take time for yourself and do the things you enjoy.
- Know that you can't do everything and it's okay to ask for help.
- Involve other whānau and friends to support each other – don't try to do everything yourself.
- Remember, you can free call or text 1737 to chat with a trained counsellor at any time. They're there for you, too.

**MAHI TAHITIA EXPRESSES THE VALUE OF WORKING TOGETHER TO DO THINGS THAT PROMOTE WELLNESS.**

**WE ARE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER SO LOOK OUT FOR PEOPLE IN YOUR WHĀNAU AND COMMUNITY THAT NEED EXTRA AROHA AND SUPPORT DURING THIS TIME.**

**NŌ REIRA, E HOA MĀ, KIA KAHA, KIA MĀIA, KIA MANAWANUI. KEEP STRONG, HAVE COURAGE, COMMITMENT AND DETERMINATION TO SUPPORT WHĀNAU AND FRIENDS THROUGH DIFFICULT TIMES.**

[A range of free suicide prevention resources can be found here.](#) Please note: the Mental Health Foundation is unable to send physical resources while Aotearoa is in noho rāhui/lockdown. All resources are free to download from the Mental Health Foundation's website.

**GETTING  
THROUGH  
TOGETHER**

WHĀIA E TĀTOU TE PAE TAWHITI

**ALL RIGHT?**

 **Mental Health Foundation**  
mauri tū, mauri ora OF NEW ZEALAND