

How will you cope after a suicide attempt?

Suicidal thoughts, feelings and actions of someone close to us may make you feel shock, disbelief, sadness, guilt, anger or fear. These can be difficult to work through, and it is not uncommon for relationships to be affected. It can be challenging to know what to do and how to cope.

Help is available!

Some options for assistance are listed on the centre back panel of this brochure. Encourage them to get professional support.

Understanding suicidal behaviour

Suicidal behaviour is complex. Your loved one may feel overwhelmed by their emotional pain or distress.

Suicidal thoughts may be a response to distressing events in the person's life that they don't know how to cope with.

Depression and anxiety are two of the most common risk factors for suicidal behaviour.

It is important to talk to a health professional/clinician about what you can do to keep the person safe, and also how this is affecting you.

Information

Family/whānau involvement helps support your person's recovery.

Following discharge from a hospital setting/emergency department, the person may still be at risk and need to be closely checked on regularly.

It is very important that people who have tried to take their life or who think about taking their own life keep their appointments with health professionals.

They may not be in a position to understand the importance of this and so need your help and reminders to attend.

Make a point of finding out when appointments are - be there to help them - get there and support them if appropriate.

Family/whānau guidelines after a suicide attempt

Look after yourself: Access help for yourself first and foremost – you don't need to do this alone.

Look out for your family/whānau: You will each have different needs. Children and young people in your family/whānau will also need support.

Go slow – Recovery takes time

- Be aware of situations that may cause further stress.
- Keep in touch with others: Find a support network for yourself. Find others you trust to talk to.
- You can only do what you are able to do. You are not responsible for another person's actions.

Communication

Offer:

- Unconditional love – be there
- Open discussion – just listen

If necessary, ask for help to talk about the tough stuff.

Let them talk honestly about how they think and feel.

Listen without judgment and be compassionate. They may prefer to speak with someone else – respect their choice.

Reassure them that you and others are there to be supportive and help them. Believe, acknowledge and respect them. Be honest about any safety concerns.

Be courageous and take the first step to initiate the conversation as the need arises.

Be low key – aim for calmness.

When conflict arises – ask for help if necessary – involve a health professional.

Remember “AEIOU”

A = Ask “are you thinking of suicide?”

E = Ensure their immediate safety

I = Identify their problems

O = Offer hope, help and support

U = Use professionals and community

Safety tips

Create a “Hope Kit” – encourage your loved one to fill a box or container with tangible reminders of reasons to live (a relaxation tape, comics, photos, music, positive, written self statements). Keep the “Hope Kit” easily accessible so it can be used to guide positive coping strategies during a suicidal crisis.

Stay around: If the person tells you they are feeling unsafe or thinking about attempting suicide, or you think things are getting worse, **don’t leave them alone.**

Get help: You could ask someone else to stay with them when you need to leave or need time out.

Help them avoid using alcohol and other drugs: This is a time when people need to feel supported. Alcohol and other drugs can worsen thoughts, feelings and impulsivity.

Making a safer environment

Remove items that someone could use to harm themselves such as sharp instruments, ropes, poisons and gas bottles or access to a car. Lock garden sheds and garages.

Medications: Store any medications in a safe and secure place. Take any old and unwanted medications to a pharmacy.

Firearms: Safely remove any firearms from the property (request help from police if required).

You can only do the best you can for the person you’re helping – some people may still harm themselves or attempt suicide.

Who can help?

In an immediate emergency phone 111 and ask for police.

1737: Free phone or text 1737 for online counselling.

Healthline: Freephone 0800 611 116 to talk to a nurse.

Talk to their GP: Encourage them to contact their GP or practice nurse if they are thinking about suicide, or if they are having difficulty with issues arising from someone else’s suicide attempt or death. The GP may refer them to a service for free counseling.

After-Hours GPs:

Rotorua: (5.30pm to 8.00am) 07 348-1000

Taupo: (7.00pm to 8.00am) – 07 376-1000

Emergency Crisis Help

Lakes DHB Acute Response Team (ART)

Rotorua & Taupo 0800 166-167 – (Available 24/7)

Lifeline: 0800 543-354

Youthline: 0800 376-633

Online therapy tools available from:

<https://www.justathought.co.nz>

<https://www.auntydee.co.nz>

Marae and cultural-based support networks, church or faith-based support networks:

Te Piki Oranga, free counselling for Maori and Pacifica: 0800 ORANGA (0800 672 642).

Other resources:

<https://www.depression.org.nz>

<https://www.mentalhealth.org.nz/home/our-work/category/51/suicide-prevention>

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After a suicide attempt or suicidal thoughts

INFORMATION FOR WHĀNAU (FAMILY AND FRIENDS)



www.lakesdhb.govt.nz

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