

Suicidal Ideation

Suicidal ideation can mean having abstract thoughts about ending your life or feeling that people would be better off without you. It may also include thinking about methods of suicide or making clear plans to take your own life.

How to assess the risk of suicide

The below 'Step Up Risk Assessment' is a tool to help you get useful information from your colleague to determine whether that person might be in immediate danger. In each step, you need to find out further information and ask questions in order to move on to the next step.



Step 1: Thoughts

We want to find out if the person you are talking to is having active suicidal thoughts.

Be specific and ask closed-ended questions such as:

Are you feeling suicidal?

Are you having thoughts about taking your own life?

If the person has confirmed that they are having suicidal thoughts you then move on to step 2.

Step 2: Plans

If the person you are helping is having suicidal thoughts the next step is to find out if they have a plan of how they would take their own life.

Ask them if they have a plan to end their life and if they can share than with you

If the person confirms they have a plan to end their life you carry on to the next step.

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Step 3: Means

Means are what they would use to carry out their plan. We want to know whether or not they have access to resources to carry out their plan or if they know how they are planning on getting access.

Approaching this step is best done by open-ended questions that refers back to their specific plan as we don't want to form or make any type of assumption.

Step 4: Timeframe

If you have reached this part of the risk assessment it means the person you are supporting is having thoughts of suicide and a plan and means to end their life.

We need to understand if that person has a timeframe in mind for taking their life. Is it a specific date? Could it be today, tomorrow, next week or next month?

When someone has any type of timeframe to end their life, this is considered imminent or high risk.

What if someone is high risk?

Remain as calm as you can

Do not leave that person alone

Call emergency services (999 or 111 if you need further guidance)

Report the incident to your Safeguarding Lead and/or HR