

How to support someone you are worried about

Sometimes we need support to look after our mental health. Any of us can experience real distress in a time of crisis, which can make someone think of suicide or talk about suicide. This can be caused by too many strong feelings and thoughts at the one time such as stress, losing a job, money worries, health problems, the death of someone close, the break up of a relationship or a combination of some of the above. If you are concerned about someone you can follow these steps.

Listen

Listening to someone can help them feel supported and less alone.

Reassure them. Show your care

Offer support and let them know you care. Say something like:

*'I'm worried about you and I want to help'
'What's up? I'm very worried about you'*

Ask the question

Don't be afraid to discuss suicide - asking about it won't put the idea in people's heads:

*'Do you feel like harming yourself?'
'Are you so down that you just want to end it all?'*

Get professional help

Do not leave a suicidal person alone. Encourage them to look for help:

*'Let's talk to someone who can help'
'You're not alone.'
There are people who can help you out of this situation'*

Support services

If you, or someone you know, needs support, someone to talk to or is in crisis:

- Contact your local GP or family doctor.
- Contact your GP out-of-hours service.
- Go to or contact the Accident and Emergency Department of your nearest hospital.

For details of local health services you can contact:

HSE Health Information line **CallSave 1850 241 850** (8:00am-8:00pm, Monday to Saturday)

Contact Samaritans:

on **1850 60 90 90** or email jo@samaritans.org
24 hours a day

For more information on mental health and wellbeing:

Go to www.yourmentalhealth.ie

Contact **Mental Health Ireland** on (01) 284 1166
Email: info@mentalhealthireland.ie

Contact Aware - Depression support

LoCall Helpline: **1890 303 302** (Monday-Wednesday 10am-10pm; Thursday-Sunday 10am-1am)
Email: wecanhelp@aware.ie Go to www.aware.ie

For information on money and debt management:

The Money and Budgeting Service (MABS) is a free and confidential service for people in debt or in danger of getting into debt.

Helpline: **1890 283 438**
(Monday-Friday 9:00am-8:00pm)
Email: helpline@mabs.ie



For information on entitlements, retraining and employment opportunities:

Citizens Information

www.citizensinformation.ie
Lo-Call **1890 777 121**
Local Centres (see Golden Pages)
Free & Confidential Service

Developed by the National Office for Suicide Prevention/HSE

Look after your mental health in tough economic times

Information Leaflet



This leaflet gives practical information on how to look after your mental health and on where to get help if you or someone you know is in crisis and needs to talk.

About mental health

Looking after your mental health will help you manage stress and stay well. Most of the time we can identify and deal with the causes of stress. Sometimes high levels of stress may develop into a more serious health issue and if it does it is important to remember you are not alone and there is help available.

Mental health is about how you think and feel and your ability to deal with ups and downs. Your mental health does not always stay the same. It can change as you move through different life stages or in response to difficulties in your life such as losing your job or having money worries. There are things you can do to look after your mental health in the same way you can look after your physical health.

Stress and worry can affect your mental and physical health. We all have times when we feel down or stressed or worried. The stress of the economic downturn, losing a job or having money worries has a different effect on each of us.



How to look after your mental health

To look after your mental health choose one or two steps below to start and build up to as many as you can each day.

Take it one day at a time

Focus on the here and now and trust that you will have what it takes to cope with tomorrow. While this may feel impossible, think of times when you overcame certain situations in your life and improve your self confidence. Plan your day so that at the end of it you will feel you have achieved something.

Talk about it and ask for help

Talking about your feelings is a good way to cope with a problem. Speak to someone you trust such as your partner, a family member or friend. If you are feeling overwhelmed by sadness or despair, contact your GP. If you feel there is no one to talk to call the Samaritans on **1850 60 90 90**.

Get involved

Keeping or taking up new hobbies or volunteering may help you meet people, feel less alone and more confident.

Get advice on money problems

Taking control of your money problems may help reduce your stress. Contact the Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS) for advice on **1890 283 438**.

Alcohol - Watch what you drink

Sometimes people drink alcohol to deal with or forget about problems but this can make you feel worse when the alcohol wears off. Avoiding too much alcohol is important, if you are feeling down or worried.

Eat and sleep well A healthy balanced diet and trying to get regular sleep will help your physical health and will also help you to be more positive and have more energy.

Keep active Regular exercise will help you sleep and relax, look and feel better. A half an hour walk most days can make all the difference.

Signs of common mental health problems

Losing your job, having money problems as well as everyday stress can make you feel alone, angry, tired or withdrawn. These feelings are normal and usually pass but if they don't go away they can be signs of a mental health problem. The signs listed below might indicate a mental health problem.

- Feelings of sadness or hopelessness
- Withdrawing from friends, family, school, work, sports or other things that are usually enjoyable
- Excessive and undue worry
- Changes in sleeping or eating habits
- Feeling tired all the time
- Major changes in mood
- Problems paying attention or staying focused
- Apathy - not caring about the things that are important to you
- Not being able to function as well at work, college or home

If you are concerned that you or someone you know might be showing signs of a mental health problem, it is important to get support. Support can range from informal support from friends or family or advice from your doctor. For more information on supports see the back page of this leaflet.