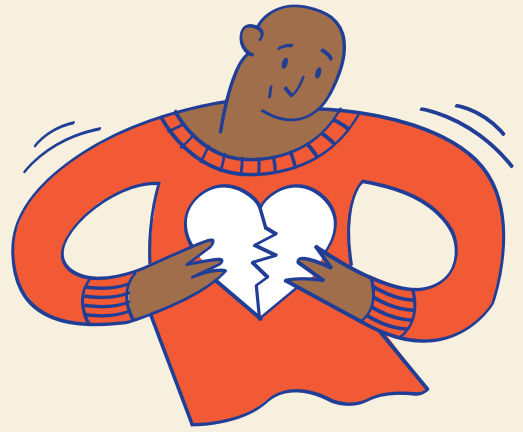


Understanding suicidal thoughts & feelings



Suicide is when someone ends their life. It's a deeply personal and complex experience often linked to feelings of hopelessness, emotional pain, or feeling like there's no other way to cope.

If you're having thoughts of suicide, it's important to know that it's not always about wanting to die. Often, it's about wanting the pain to stop or finding relief from overwhelming feelings. These thoughts can feel heavy and isolating, but you're not alone.

Every day, thousands of people across Australia reach out for support, find hope, and go on to live meaningful, connected lives.

Signs & effects

Suicidal thoughts and feelings can show up in different ways for different people. They might come and go or feel constant, and they can be really overwhelming. Some common experiences include:



Feeling hopeless or trapped

Thinking that things won't get better or feeling like there's no way forward.



Withdrawing from others

Disconnecting from friends, family, or social activities.



Thinking about death or dying

Having ongoing thoughts about ending your life or wanting to escape emotional pain.



Taking more risks than usual

Acting recklessly, using more alcohol or drugs, or doing things that could lead to harm.



Making plans or saying goodbye

Giving away personal items or talking as if you won't be around.



Changes in mood or behaviour

Feeling unusually irritable, numb, or experiencing sudden mood swings.

Causes

Suicidal thoughts often come from a mix of difficult experiences and feelings, such as:

Using substances to cope

Alcohol and drugs can make it harder to manage emotions and think clearly, which can increase risk.

Managing mental health challenges

Things like depression, anxiety, or other conditions can increase risk, especially without support.

Living with chronic pain or illness

Ongoing health challenges can make daily life feel really hard to manage.

Coping with loss or grief

The death of someone close, relationship changes, or major life transitions can feel overwhelming.

Going through trauma or abuse

Experiences of physical, emotional, or sexual abuse can lead to feelings of deep distress.

Feeling isolated or without support

A lack of connection or struggling to reach out can make distress feel even heavier.

Experiencing suicidal thoughts and feelings is never your fault. Whatever the cause, there are ways to navigate what you're feeling. And remember, support is available every step of the way.

Recognising when and how suicidality shows up

Having a plan like the one below can help you understand your triggers, recognise how thoughts affect you, and find ways to stay safe.

Managing suicidal thoughts

Anticipate What situations or feelings might lead to suicidal thoughts?
e.g., conflict, feeling lonely, reminders of past trauma

Identify How will I know I need extra support?
e.g., withdrawing from others, feeling numb, struggling with everyday tasks

Manage What can I do to keep myself safe?
e.g., call a trusted person, use the Beyond Now safety planning tool, focus on taking small next steps



Wherever you are, help is at your fingertips with the **Support Toolkit**

➤ lifeline.org.au/toolkit

Practical management strategies



Talk to someone you trust

Sharing how you're feeling with a friend, family member, or support service can help emotions feel less overwhelming.



Write down what's on your mind

Journaling can be a helpful way to express emotions and make sense of what you're going through.



Take it one step at a time

Remind yourself that even the hardest feelings won't last forever. Try focusing on getting through the next minute, then the next.



Engage your senses

Use grounding activities like the 5 senses technique, reciting something in order, listening to music, or box breathing.



Limit access to harmful items

If you can, try to remove or safely store things that could be used to hurt yourself.



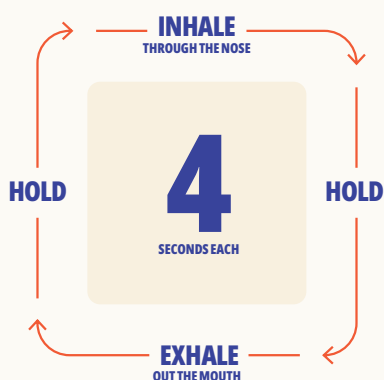
Create a safety plan

Having a list of things that comfort you, people you can contact, and steps to take if you're feeling unsafe can make a big difference.

Want to try something now?

If you're feeling distressed or unsure where to start, a grounding technique like **box breathing** or **using your five senses** can help ease physical sensations and take your focus off suicidal thoughts. You can also create a suicide safety plan using the **Beyond Now** safety planning app or website.

BOX BREATHING



5 SENSES TECHNIQUE

Look for...

5 things you can **see**

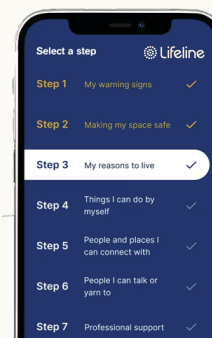
4 things you can **feel**

3 things you can **hear**

2 things you can **smell**

1 things you can **taste**

MAKE A SAFETY PLAN WITH THE BEYOND NOW APP OR WEB TOOL



Everyone is different, so what works for someone else might not work for you, and that's okay.

The key is to keep experimenting until you find what helps you most.

Wherever you are, help is at your fingertips with the **Support Toolkit**

lifeline.org.au/toolkit

When to seek help

It's important to speak with a health professional if you or someone you know is:

- ✓ Thinking about ending their life or feeling hopeless most of the time.
- ✓ Withdrawing from friends, family, or activities.
- ✓ Finding it difficult to focus or make decisions due to overwhelming emotions.
- ✓ Experiencing significant changes in mood, sleep, or energy levels.
- ✓ Feeling like a burden or unable to cope with daily life.
- ✓ Struggling with physical symptoms like exhaustion, pain, or loss of appetite.

Reaching out can feel difficult, but it's a sign of strength.

Support is always available to help you feel more in control and hopeful for the future.

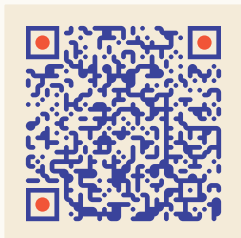
Support is available

Understanding and managing suicidality isn't something you have to do on your own.

Head to our **Support Toolkit** to find more practical strategies and discover national and local support services that can help.

The Support Toolkit also offers information on a wide range of mental health and wellbeing topics you can explore at your own pace, whenever you need.

Visit lifeline.org.au/suicide/services or scan the QR code to get started.



If you're feeling overwhelmed right now, Lifeline is here to support you.

You can reach us 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

☎ Call 13 11 14

✉ Text 0477 131 114

💬 Chat online at lifeline.org.au/crisis-chat

If your life is in danger, please call 000.

Wherever you are, help is at your fingertips with the **Support Toolkit**

➔ lifeline.org.au/toolkit