

# Anaesthesiologist's Suicide Prevention And Emotional Health Assistance Pack

This aid memoir is intended to help

- Those who have suicidal thought or fear that they may be in danger of hurting themselves
- Those who are concerned about someone else not being able to cope or committing suicide
- Anyone wanting to access web based, suicidology resources
- Anyone wishing to maintain their emotional health

# You are worried about yourself

A desire to hurt yourself, feelings of hopelessness, being unable to see the future and realising that you just can't go on like this anymore are often important warning signs.

## **You are in Danger of committing suicide**

Choosing to end your life feels like the only option and seems to be the most logical solution to your problems.

## **Despite what every instinct tells you, suicide is not the solution.**

You need to get help right now. You are not able to cope with this alone. Tell someone how you feel. You need to be as clear about your concerns as possible in plain language. Push for an emergency admission to an appropriate professional care centre. This is a life threatening situation that needs to be taken seriously.

- Contact the Suicide Crisis Line – Depression and Anxiety Group
  - Phone:- +27 11 262 6396
  - 24hr Helpline:- 0800 12 13 13
  - Suicide crisis line :- 0800 567 567
  - SMS:- 31393 (they will phone back)
- Contact lifeline
  - Phone/Skype:- 0861 322 322
  - email:- <http://www.lifelinecounsellor.co.za>
- Contact your own Councillor/ Psychologist / Doctor / Religious Leader
- Contact your Mentor / Coach / Colleague that you like and respect
- Contact the SASA Wellness of Anaesthesiologists Group
  - Dr Caroline Lee :- 0827772136

**If the call is unsatisfactory contact someone else until you feel that someone is taking you seriously**

Do not be alone. Ensure that you are in the company of others at all times

# You are worried about someone else

Be aware of the warning signs and risk factors in people around you. You may not be responsible for someone else committing suicide but you may be responsible for saving their lives.

Go with your gut instincts and act on them irrespective of what the person may do or say.

## Warning Signs

- Preoccupied with death / talking about death or suicide or a specific plan / “I wish I were dead”
- Looking for a method – asking questions, stealing / hoarding drugs
- Self-loathing / hatred
- Hopelessness / no reason to live
- Trapped / helpless / humiliated / no avenue to escape
- A burden to others
- An intolerable situation
- Rejection of praise / positive input
- Loss of compassion
- Putting will in order / elaborate goodbyes
- Unable to think of the future
- Withdrawal from others
- Insomnia
- Losing interest in things / ability to experience pleasure
- Intense anxiety / panic attacks / irritable / rage

## Risk Factors

- Mental disorders
  - Depression / Bipolar
  - Alcohol / substance abuse
  - Schizophrenia
  - Any psychotic disorder
  - Antisocial personality disorder
  - Anxiety disorders
  - Impulsiveness / Aggression
- Previous suicide attempt
- Family history of suicides / attempts
- Serious medical condition / pain

The majority of people with these conditions will not engage in suicidal behaviour but their risks are higher.

## Actions

- Tell the person that you are concerned about them
- Mention specifics and explain why you are concerned about them committing suicide
- Ask if they are considering suicide
- Ask if they have a councillor / clinician who can be contacted
- Tell them that you care about them and that they are not alone
- Do not argue / preach / reason against suicide
- Identify a source of help together e.g. psychologist
- Help make an urgent appointment and offer to go with them
- If you think the threat is imminent –
  - Don't leave them alone
  - Remove any possible instruments
  - Arrange urgent admission
  - Contact the resources under the section on people who are worried about themselves
- Continue your involvement passed the acute phase
- Assist / facilitate the taking of prescribed medications
- Watch out for side effects / deterioration / relapse
- Encourage perseverance and explain that therapies take time
- Support in all manners possible
- Long term actions
  - Avoid sending on holiday where they may be alone or cannot be monitored
  - Assist in rescheduling responsibilities to provide Eustress (good stress) as opposed to Distress (bad stress)
  - Help to bring a moderate amount of variety in all aspects of work, family and play so that nothing becomes overbearing.
  - Offer escapes if any situation becomes intolerable
  - Offer friendship, understanding and sympathy
  - Be confidential
  - Encourage a psychological wellness program

# Suicide Resources

## Websites

<b>Name</b>	<b>URL</b>	<b>Location</b>
Centre for Suicide Prevention	<a href="http://suicideinfo.ca/">http://suicideinfo.ca/</a>	Canada
International Association for Suicide Prevention	<a href="http://www.iasp.info/">http://www.iasp.info/</a>	Global
Suicide Prevention and Support	<a href="http://www.suicide.org/index.html">http://www.suicide.org/index.html</a>	USA
The South African Depression and Anxiety Group	<a href="http://www.sadag.org/">http://www.sadag.org/</a>	S.A.
Suicide Prevention Help	<a href="http://www.suicidepreventionhelp.com/">http://www.suicidepreventionhelp.com/</a>	Global
American Foundation for Suicide Prevention	<a href="http://www.afsp.org/">http://www.afsp.org/</a>	USA
Lifeline	<a href="http://www.lifeline.org.za/">http://www.lifeline.org.za/</a>	S.A.

# Emotional Health Tips

Just as we have a responsibility to look after our academic knowledge and our behaviour, so we have a responsibility to look after our emotional well-being.

## Tips

- Proportion time for self, family and work and dedicate time to each in diminishing order of magnitude. Don't try and spend time on more than one aspect at the same time. If you have to steal time from one aspect for another, consciously make it up later.
  - Vary your interests as much as possible with sports, hobbies and activities
  - Concentrate on enjoying yourself in everything that you do
- Enhance your self- image which will give self-confidence, self-respect and self-esteem
  - Enjoy yourself as much as possible – fake it till you make it
  - Consciously reinforce the fact that you are good, whole and worth something while looking at yourself in the mirror when brushing your teeth
  - Set high standards for yourself in terms of books, TV, clothes, bath depth / temp etc
  - Wear perfume, clothes, underwear that make you feel good irrespective if others notice.
  - Stand up for yourself if others try to put you down
  - Don't talk to yourself using negatives, don't talk yourself down
  - Avoid the cycle of job avoidance and laziness
  - Give yourself achievable goals
  - Try your best at all times
  - It is better to ask for help and succeed than to do it on your own and fail
  - Celebrate your victories and be proud of them
- Concentrate on being optimistic
- Develop a sense of humour – learn to laugh at yourself
- Bank emotions from pleasant experiences, in times of need these can be drawn upon to get you through hard times
- Have an emotional refuge which you can return to when negative emotions become overwhelming.
- Nurture your friends and lovers
- Get a coach in whom you can confide and ask advice
- Have heroes who possess qualities that you strive to emulate
- Don't take responsibility for other people's emotions, allow them to own them
- Solutions to arguments are evolving compromises where everyone involved wins
- Don't allow problems to weigh you down. examine them from all aspects, take a rest from them regularly, try and solve them in incremental bits
- Don't be afraid of your emotions. Allow yourself to embrace the full range.
- Don't worry about unimportant things that do not enhance your survival or quality of life
- Worry about now not the future or past over which you have no control
- Concentrate on the aspects of your life that you are able to change and adjust to those that you can't.
- Be gentle on yourself and others. To err is human, we fail despite our best intentions
- Nobody ever said that life would be fair