|  |
| --- |
| Summary NotesSuicide: How to support during crisis moments |

You can do this

The first thing to note is that you are absolutely capable of managing this situation. You might not do it perfectly, but you \*can\* make a difference, and it’s important that you try.

## try to convey calm

When supporting someone who is suicidal, you’re likely to feel pretty panicked. It’s important to try to stay calm if you can because calmness is catching (even if it’s fake calmness)

* Be the swan
* Think about your breathing
* Think about your body position
* Use slow low low talking
* It’s okay to sound like a broken record
* If you need to take a breath and re-centre yourself

Do you have a favourite breathing or calming technique you could talk someone through?

## Remain present

The most important thing is to remain physically and emotionally present in the face of distress. You do not need to say and do the perfect things. By simply being there you send a really powerful message and will enable the person struggling to know they are not alone.

* Never leave someone who is suicidal alone
* Simply sitting in silence is often enough
* It might seem quiet and awkward to you – they’ve probably got a lot of noise going on
* You can state “I’m right here” or “I’m with you” or “I’m not going anywhere”
* You can also remain present on the end of a phone line or video call in a similar way

How can you make it clear you’re sticking around?

## seek places and faces of safety

Never leave a suicidal person alone, but take them with you to find places or people who will help to keep them safer if you can.

* Try to move away from danger
* Try to move towards places that feel safe and comfortable
* Think about whether there is someone who can help – can you go to them
* Or call them to come to you
* Involve the person you’re supporting in deciding who else should be involved
* Call the Samaritans or a crisis helpline if you need support for both of you

Who could you go to or call to help with this kind of situation?

## ask connecting questions

Build bridges with the person you’re supporting by asking them questions that show you care and that you’re listening. Every time you ask a question that creates connection you give them more reason to stay present in the world.

* Listen to understand
* Try to get them onto topics they are passionate about
* Ask them questions that show you’re listening or have listened in the past
* Ask about small future things that will give them reason – e.g. time with siblings and pets

What kind of questions show you’re really listening?

## find reasons to stay alive

We don’t need to find big reasons for a person to stay alive forever, we just need to find reasons to get them through right now… it can feel easier to defer the decision to die that to commit to staying alive ad finitum… so what might be a reason to stay alive today, tomorrow, just until the end of the week?

* Focus on small things they might look forward to
* Wonder aloud with them about where they were meant to be today, tomorrow
* Think about friends, pets, family who they might want to spend a little time with
* Or a film they can’t wait to see, or the next episode of a favourite TV show.

What small reasons might there be for staying alive just another hour?

look for distractions

Try to take thoughts away from thoughts of dying. Any distraction will do no matter how daft it might seem, your role here is to try to fill their head with superfluous other thoughts rather than the big scary ones.

* Watch the clouds or try a grounding activity like 5,4,3,2,1
* Listen to music together or watch some videos
* Show them photos on your phone
* Ask their opinion on something that will get them thinking

How can you while away time and distract someone?

## the one minute rule

This all feels big and scary; it is! But remember… you only ever have to get through the next minute. That often feels more doable for you and more doable for the person struggling too. Don’t over complicate it, just get through one minute, then think about the next one.

* Get through one minute – use a timer on your phone
* Or one song
* Or one episode of a favourite TV show
* Notice how things feel… is there any change on a 1-10 scale after the first minute? The second..?

How can you chart changing feelings as the minutes pass?

## aftewards, write a safety plan

Once the danger has passed this time, write a safety plan with the person who is struggling. This will help to keep them safe and will help you to help them too. You can complete a safety plan online at [stayingsafe.net](https://stayingsafe.net/).

Who could/ should be involved in creating the safety plan?

### Connect with Pooky

You can connect with Pooky on [Twitter](http://www.twitter.com/pookyh), [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/pookyh), [Instagram](http://www.instagram.com/pookyh), [Facebook](http://www.facebook.com/pookyh) or [LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/in/pooky/). You may also be interested in the [books she has authored, edited or contributed to](https://amzn.to/2Yhssmj) and [her podcast](https://pookyh.buzzsprout.com/).

### On-demand training / speaking requests

You can see all our [on demand courses here](https://elearning.creativeeducation.co.uk/available-courses/) (the free ones are [here](https://www.creativeeducation.co.uk/available-courses/?_price=free)) and our [free resources and webinars](https://www.creativeeducation.co.uk/free-resources/) are here. To book a tailored walkthrough of our website and to get your whole staff team 4 weeks’ free access to trial the site, you can [book a slot with me here](https://calendly.com/pookyh/walkthrough). For bespoke speaking or training enquiries, you can [book a chat with me here](https://calendly.com/pookyh/speaking).