

# Suicide in ADHD

Research shows that adults with ADHD are 5 times more likely to attempt suicide.

1 in 4 women with ADHD have made attempts on their life, while men are more likely to end their life. Accidental death is also common. Underlying impulsivity can make them more prone to making spontaneous attempts on their life without necessarily intending to die.

**Remember that thoughts of harming yourself or ending your life are often temporary. Your feelings will pass.**

Vulnerability to suicide is complex, but several factors have been identified as possible contributors in people who have ADHD.

These include:

- Differences in decision-making (e.g., underestimating risk)
- More risk-taking behaviours
- Impulsive tendencies
- Difficulty regulating emotions
- Criminal behaviour or trouble with authorities
- Difficulty engaging with therapy, services, or self-help to address health problems
- Achieving a lower education
- Exposure to trauma (e.g., experiencing parental domestic violence during childhood)
- Greater health issues and adversities (e.g., chronic pain, smoking, poverty, etc)
- Hormone fluctuations in women
- History of substance misuse (note that the risk of suicide doubles)
- Co-occurring mental health conditions such as depression and anxiety (a seven-fold increased risk of suicide)



## Early warning signs

If you or somebody you know has ADHD, it is important to be aware of the following factors which are known to increase the risk of suicide:

- Frequent suicidal thoughts
- Expressions of suicide
- Substance misuse
- Feeling like a burden on other
- Feeling worthless
- Having little or no sense of belonging
- Increased anxiety, stress, or agitation
- Feeling hopeless about the future
- Withdrawing from others (e.g., friends, family, loved ones)
- Significant mood changes
- Feelings of guilt or shame

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## Where can I go for help?

### Use self-help methods

Have a safety plan ready to help prevent or manage a crisis. The Samaritans website contains a free, downloadable template with prompt questions and space to note down some of your thoughts and feelings. It also encourages you to think of practical ways to address your circumstances.

**Web** [samaritans.org](http://samaritans.org)

**Web** [samaritans.org/how-we-can-help/if-youre-worried-about-someone-else/supporting-someone-suicidal-thoughts/creating-safety-plan/](http://samaritans.org/how-we-can-help/if-youre-worried-about-someone-else/supporting-someone-suicidal-thoughts/creating-safety-plan/)

Make sure that the document is visibly accessible to you, or kept in a safe place. It is recommended that you share this with somebody (e.g., a loved one or professional) so that they can follow your individualised plan and support you appropriately. It may also serve as a positive distraction for you.

The Berkshire Neuropsychology service does not exclusively manage risk behaviour or mental health. If it is necessary then we will signpost you to the relevant specialist services.

We recommend that you make note of the following contacts and leave them in an appropriate place should you need to call upon them in future:

### Local services

- Call Berkshire Mental Health Crisis Team [0800 129 9999](tel:08001299999)

### National services

- Samaritans: Call [116 123](tel:116123) (lines open 24 hours every day)
- Sane Line: Call [0300 304 7000](tel:03003047000) (lines open between 4.30pm – 10.30pm every day)
- SHOUT: Text the word 'SHOUT' to 85258
- Stay Alive Smartphone App: Available to download [prevent-suicide.org.uk/](http://prevent-suicide.org.uk/)
- Visit [thecalmzone.net/guide-list](http://thecalmzone.net/guide-list)
- NHS 111 service
- Dial 999 in an emergency or if there is an immediate threat to your life



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