

Toolkit for Family and Friends

Please see below a selection of resources that can help you to understand, support and care for a family member or friend who you feel may be at risk of suicide or who has expressed suicide ideation.

Reaching Out

Bear in mind that getting anyone, autistic or not to open up and talk about their feelings/worries/issues they may be having can be a struggle. Make time to listen, join in with their activity, run errands – a car journey avoids direct eye contact and can make it less intense, try to avoid questions that will give you one-word answers like yes, no and fine. Possibly use “tell me about”, “why”, “how”, “what do you think about...” to start a conversation and get someone to open up

Self-Care

If this is something that is affecting you personally, please do not underestimate the stress it will be causing you and your friends and family and also seek help to take care of yourself so you can provide the most effective support.

Take time to talk to professionals or people who can be objective. If you are able to go for a walk and get some fresh air, great; if not, try mindfulness breathing techniques and try to reset your thoughts. Do not struggle alone; the resources attached are to support both you and your loved ones.

Trust your instincts.

If you suspect someone is in immediate danger, please call 999, or call the Samaritans on 116 123 who will listen without judgement.

Resources

Website title: Coping strategies from Mind

Website Description: These are some coping strategies recommended by the national mental health charity, Mind.

Website Link: [What can I do to help myself cope - Mind](https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/tips-for-everyday-living/coping-strategies/)

Website title: Autism and mental health- Mind

Website Description: This website provides information about autism and mental health by the national mental health charity, Mind.

Website Link: <https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/tips-for-everyday-living/autism-and-mental-health/>



Website title: Crisis Tools

Website Description: Crisis is a free platform including guides, courses and e-learning co-produced by young people and mental health professionals. It is useful for anyone who supports young people with their mental health.

Website Link: Register - Crisis Tools

Website title: Suicide & Co

Website Description: Suicide and Co provide 12 sessions of free counselling to anyone 18+ who has been bereaved by suicide in England or Wales.

Website Link: Suicide&Co | <https://suicideandco.squarespace.com/>

Website title: Autism Central

Website Description: Parents and carers of autistic children, young people and adults can find out about autism and services available. This website has its own resources, one-to-one chat to find local support, and virtual support groups.

Website Link: <https://www.autismcentral.org.uk/>

Website title: Counselling Changes Lives

Website Description: – this link will find a local counsellor

Website Link: BACP <https://www.bacp.co.uk/search/Therapists>

Website title: National Autistic Society

Website Description: Information on why there is a higher rate of suicide amongst people with autism and what support is available

Website Link: <https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/professional-practice>

Local Support

If you live in the Teesside region, the local Mental Health Support teams for people who have autism include:

- Tees Esk Wear Valley (TEWV) – 0300 013 2000
- Daisy Chain – 01642 531248
- MAIN – 01642 608012



