



**MENTAL HEALTH
FIRST AID®**

For Anyone. For Everyone.®

Understanding suicide and non-suicidal self-injury

Suicide is a global issue that impacts not only individuals, but families, communities and economies. On average, nine Australians die by suicide each day (ABS, 2020). Despite this, it is important to realise that learning to talk safely about suicide can lead to life-saving prevention and intervention. Your words and actions can save a life...

When having a conversation with someone who may be experiencing a mental health crisis, it's important to consider:



Asking the person directly about their suicidal thoughts or self-injuring behaviours if they are presenting with any one of the warning signs.



Assessing the urgency of the risk and remember the lack of a plan does not guarantee safety. It's important to take all thoughts of suicide seriously. It's also important to keep yourself and others safe.



Expressing empathy and offer reassurance that thoughts of suicide are common and there's help available. Be conscious of your own judgments and feelings towards the situation. Making sure they know you care and want to help them should be the priority.



Connecting them with others and seek immediate help from professional supports (e.g. GP, Emergency 000 or Hospital Emergency Department, Mental Health Crisis team, or other supports used in the past). Ensure the person has safety contacts available.

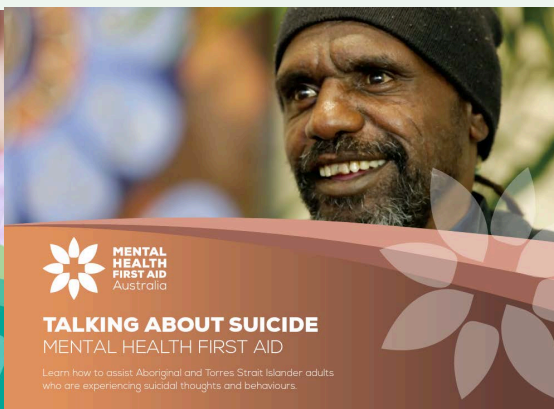


Working together to keep them safe by encouraging the person to do most of the talking about their thoughts and feelings. It's also important to involve the person in creating a safety plan and deciding who will be told. Do not keep their plan for suicide a secret.

If you're interested in learning more, you can explore our relevant specialised courses:



Conversations about suicide teaches adults how to assist and support someone experiencing suicidal thoughts and behaviours. For more information about this course, visit [here](#).



Talking about suicide teaches adults how to assist and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders experiencing suicidal thoughts and behaviours. For more information about this course, visit [here](#).



Conversations about non-suicidal self-injury teaches adults how to assist and support someone engaging in self-injury. For more information about this course, visit [here](#).

For more helpful tips when providing MHFA to someone experiencing suicidal thoughts and behaviours, you can read articles here:

- How to talk about suicide - your words matter [visit here](#)
- MHFA Guidelines for suicidal thoughts and behaviours [visit here](#)
- Guidelines for providing mental health first aid to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people experiencing suicidal thoughts and behaviours [visit here](#)