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## What is suicide?

Depression can cause someone to feel so hopeless that they feel like they want to die. Suicide is the act of taking your own life or killing yourself. If you, or someone you know feels this way, you should seek help.

## Suicide Danger Signs

- **Previous suicide attempts:** Between 20 and 50 percent of people who kill themselves have previously attempted suicide. Those who make serious suicide attempts are at much greater risk of actually taking their lives.
- **Talking about death or suicide:** People who commit suicide often talk about it directly or indirectly. Be alert to such statements as, "My family would be better off without me". Sometimes those contemplating suicide talk as if they are saying goodbye or going away.
- **Depression:** Although most depressed people are not suicidal, most suicidal people are depressed. Serious depression can be manifested in obvious sadness, but often it is expressed instead as a loss of pleasure or withdrawal from activities that had once been enjoyable.

Be concerned about depressed persons if at least five of the following symptoms have been present nearly every day for at least two weeks:

- depressed mood
- change in sleeping patterns
- change in appetite or weight
- speaking or moving with unusual speed or slowness
- fatigue or loss of energy
- feelings of worthlessness, self-reproach or guilt
- thoughts of death or suicide

**Additional factors that point to an increased risk for suicide in depressed individuals are:**

- Extreme anxiety, agitation or enraged behaviour
- Excessive drug and / or alcohol use or abuse
- History of physical or emotional illness
- Feelings of hopelessness or desperation

## Take the signs seriously

75% of all suicides give some warning of their intentions to a friend or family member.

All suicide threats and attempts should be taken seriously.

## If someone you know is threatening suicide:

### Be willing to listen

- Take the initiative to ask what is troubling them.
- DON'T be afraid to ask whether he/she is considering suicide.
- Do NOT try to argue anyone out of suicide, rather let the person know that you care and understand that they are not alone, that suicidal feelings are temporary, that depression can be treated and that problems can be solved. AVOID the temptation to say: "You have so much to live for" or that "suicide will hurt your family."

### In a crisis

- In an acute crisis, take the person to an emergency room or walk-in clinic – **DO NOT leave the person alone until help is available.**
- Remove drugs, razors, scissors or firearms that could be used in a suicide attempt away from the potentially suicidal person.
- If the above options are unavailable, call your local emergency numbers.

## Where to get help?

- **Talk to somebody you trust and who cares.** Somebody who is willing to listen.
- **Seek professional help.** There are people trained to help people suffering from depression. Speak to a social worker at your local clinic or a psychologist or psychiatrist.

**Remember, depression doesn't show itself the same way with everyone. Only a trained professional should diagnose someone with depression. If you think that you, or someone you know may have depression, seek professional help. Start by calling the numbers below to speak to a counselor.**

**ChildLine: 0800 055 555 FREE (Toll Free)**

**LifeLine: 011 728-1347**

**The South African Depression and Anxiety Group (SADAG): 011 234 4837 or 0800 20 50 26 to speak to a trained counselor**

**SADAG Suicide Crisis Line: 0800 567 567 or SMS 3139**

**SADAG Mental Health Line 011 234 4837**

# WHEN THINGS GET TOUGH

everything  
will be okay

STRESS AND DEPRESSION





Your teenage years (adolescence) can be a stressful time emotionally, socially and physically. You can feel like you are going totally crazy and that you just can't cope with everything that's going on!

There can be so many stressful things to deal with! School work may be too much and too difficult, fitting in with your friends isn't always easy, your body is changing and that can be confusing! You may even be dealing with unemployment! Figuring out who you are and where you want to be in your life can be frightening!

So what can you do?

There is always hope. It's important to be in touch with what you are feeling and know that you're not alone – there are people you can talk to for help and support!

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## What exactly is Stress?

Stress is your body's way of responding to emotional and physical demands.

We call this the fight or flight response. When you feel threatened, physically or emotionally, your nervous system responds by releasing a flood of stress hormones including adrenaline and cortisol.

Stress

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## What are the signs and symptoms of stress?

Stress can show up in many ways. Here are a few ways it can debilitate and disturb your life.

- **Anxiety or panic attacks** - This is when you have difficulty breathing and your heart beats really fast. You may feel afraid and panic.
- **Physical symptoms** - You may develop a headache or a skin rash.
- **Changing sleeping patterns** - You may have difficulty falling asleep, or waking up.
- **Substance abuse** - You may find you are drinking more alcohol or using drugs to cope.
- **High heart rate** - Your heart might beat much faster than usual.

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more than

## What is depression?

It is normal for everyone to have feelings of sadness, but for people living with depression it is much more than feeling a little blue now and then. Depression is a long-term mood disorder that includes prolonged feelings of sadness, discouragement, and hopelessness that can last for weeks, months, or even longer.

Sad

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## Am I depressed?

You may be depressed if you are experiencing any of the following:

- **I feel helpless and hopeless** - When you feel like you can't do anything to change the situation or you believe it's impossible for it to change, you may be depressed.
- **I have little or no energy** - This may include always feeling tired even when you've had enough rest. You might not want to get out of bed.
- **I don't feel motivated to do anything** - Not even wanting to get out of bed in the mornings. Not going to work or family gatherings.
- **I'm struggling to concentrate** - When your mind is scattered and you can't pay attention to one task long enough to complete it.
- **I have physical symptoms** (headaches, fatigue, changes in weight: either losing or gaining a lot of weight).
- **I don't want to see anyone!** - you feel like you want to isolate yourself from friends and family members and even stop doing the activities you once enjoyed together.
- **I want to hurt myself** - You hurt yourself by cutting or pinching and you don't know why.

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## What can I do keep my stress levels in check?

- **Get enough rest** - Sleep at least 5 -7 hours a night.
- **If you are studying, have a 5min break every 25 minutes** - Close your books, get up, stretch, make a cup of tea and come back feeling refreshed.
- **Give yourself a bigger break** - Go out and have some fun with friends or family.
- **Exercise really helps!** Even if it means taking a 15 minute walk, try and be active often.
- **Stress is a temporary problem** - Trust that it won't always be this way!
- **Challenges are opportunities** - You can learn a lot from the hard times you go through. Practice solving your problems yourself and ask others for help and guidance when you can.
- **Eat a healthy and balanced diet** - Try to stay strong and healthy. Stress sometimes makes people stop eating or eat too much. Both are unhealthy. Eat nutritious food to keep your mind and body strong.
- **Meditation and prayer** can help you to feel hopeful and positive. Take time out to communicate with your higher power or to be out in nature.
- **Breathe** - Take 3 deep breaths when things feel out of control.

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