

Helping to keep your loved ones safe

Sometimes, people who are experiencing difficult times in their lives because of relationship breakups, loss of a job or a home, death of a person or pet, or prejudice or stigma from others about who they are, it can result in their feeling vulnerable, sad or anxious.

Feeling isolated or a burden on others, especially after having long term difficulties, can mean some people feel like giving up or that suicide might be an option.

It can be helpful to check in with that person regularly, to see how they are going. Acknowledging them can be a powerful tool that helps them feel that someone cares, that they are somewhere safe and they are connected.

If your gut feeling, your intuition, tells you that something is not quite right for one of your clients (e.g. they seem withdrawn, look hopeless/helpless, talk about death, or are acting out of character), trust your instincts and check it out.

When it feels right, reach out to them in an honest and open way—ask how they are doing and if they need any support. If they then give any indication they might be feeling hopeless or desperate or thinking about suicide, it's safe to ask: 'Are you thinking of killing or hurting yourself?' If they say 'yes', you can help them refer to any of the services below.

If they say no

- Let them know that you are concerned (and why—what you have seen/noticed) and that you and others care
- Let them know you can help them find someone to talk to (whatever is going on), help is available and does make a difference
- Leave the door open for them to come to you
- Keep checking in with them
- Listen carefully, without judgment, blame or criticism
- Don't make assumptions about how they feel, what they think—let them tell you
- Be mindful of your body language
- Be gentle and compassionate
- Stay calm, positive and hopeful

- ← Help connect them to other people and services that can help
- ← Help them develop a safety plan, e.g. www.manawaplan.co.nz
- ← If they have a plan to kill themselves, help them remove the means to do it
- ← Check in on them regularly
- ← Help them strengthen their natural supports—friends, whānau and community.

The AEIOU of suicide prevention—what we can ALL do to help save a life:



Ask: 'are you thinking of suicide?'



Ensure their immediate safety: remove any means they have to kill themselves



Identify their problems: encourage them to talk about what's happening for them



Offer hope, help and support: show that you care and that they will be okay

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Use professionals and community: support them to get to services that can help (below)

I know there's a lot going on for you right now...

I'm gutted that you are feeling this bad...

When life has been really hard before, what or who helped you get through it?

Where to go for help in Nelson/Marlborough?

- If they are at immediate risk, call **111** and ask for police
- **For acute mental health issues:**
 - Nelson/Tasman: 0800 776 364 then press 2 for urgent concerns, or Hospital (03) 546 1800
 - Marlborough/Blenheim: 0800 948 497 then press 2 for urgent concerns, or Hospital (03) 520 9999
 - Golden Bay—Te Whare Mahana: (03) 525 7647
- Use the free text/phone number **1737** for free counselling 24/7
- NZ Safety Plan app www.manawaplan.co.nz