

Managing thoughts of suicide and self-harm.

Experiencing suicidal thoughts can feel overwhelming and distressing. These thoughts can show up for different reasons, and they're more common than people often realise. You might worry that the thoughts won't pass or feel unsure about what to do next.

Even though they can feel very powerful in the moment, thoughts, and feelings usually change over time, especially when you're able to connect with support.

Coping right now

If you're struggling but not in immediate danger, these strategies can help you get through the moment.

Put space between your thoughts and actions

Tell yourself: 'I will wait 24 hours before I do anything.' This creates space to seek help and lets the most intense feelings pass.

Make your environment safer

Put anything you could use to hurt yourself out of reach. You might give it to someone you trust or move it somewhere less accessible. If it helps, move to a different space, go outside, or be somewhere around other people, even if you're not talking to them directly.

Tell someone how you're feeling

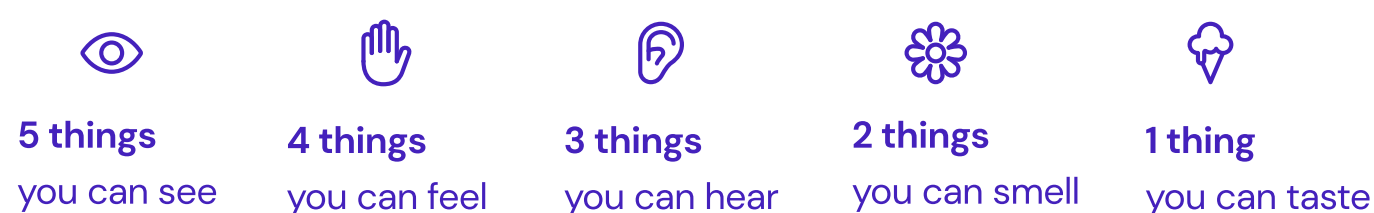
Reach out to a friend, family member, or 24/7 support line like Suicide Call Back Service. You don't have to explain everything. Just starting the conversation is enough. You could say something like: 'I'm not okay right now. Can you stay with me?' or 'I've been having a really tough time and could use someone to talk to.'

Ground yourself in the moment

Do something that has given you even a small amount of relief before like a walk, music, a shower, or slow deep breathing.

You might try the 5–4–3–2–1 grounding technique.

Look around and name →



Recognising your warning signs

When you can recognise the early signals that things are shifting for you, it becomes easier to reach out and use your coping strategies before things feel unmanageable. Warning signs might look like:

Changes in behaviour

- Spending less time with others
- Changes in eating or sleep patterns
- Taking risks or acting more recklessly than usual
- Finding it harder to look after yourself or complete daily tasks
- Giving away possessions or making plans related to suicide
- Increased use of alcohol or other drugs

Changes in emotions or thoughts

- Feeling trapped or like there's no way out
- Thinking about death as escape or relief
- Feeling guilty, ashamed, or like a burden
- Losing interest in the future or things that once mattered to you
- Urges to hurt yourself

Life events that can increase distress

- Job, relationship, or financial stress
- Physical or mental health challenges
- Major life changes or transitions
- Grief or difficult anniversaries
- Past trauma resurfacing

If you notice some of these signs in yourself, it doesn't mean you will act on suicidal thoughts. It may simply be a sign that you need more support right now. Reaching out to your GP, contacting a crisis support service, or talking to someone you trust can help.

Help is available 24/7.

If you feel like you might act on suicidal thoughts or you're not able to keep yourself safe, it's important to get support straight away. You can:

- Call **Triple Zero (000)** if you or someone else are in immediate danger
- Connect with **Lifeline** (13 11 14), **13 YARN** (13 92 76) or **Suicide Call Back Service** (1300 659 467)
- Go to your nearest emergency department

If you're unsure what to do, calling a crisis support service can help you decide your next step. You don't need to wait until things feel unbearable.

You don't have to do this alone.

In **SANE Forums**, you might share what's been on your mind, ask how others have coped, or simply read and know you're not alone.

SANE's Better Off With You community hosts real stories from people who've experienced suicidal thoughts or self-harm and found their way through.

SANE RecoveryClub is a free six-month online recovery program combining peer support, professional guidance, and practical tools that's designed to complement clinical care.

SANE's Service Enquiry Line (1800 187 263) and **Webchat** (sane.org) can help you find the right mental health support for you. Available Mon–Fri, 10am–8pm AEST/AEDT.

Safety planning.

A safety plan is a personal, practical plan that helps you notice when things are getting harder and reminds you what can help you stay safe.

A safety plan might include:

- Early signs that things may be getting harder for you
- Things that help you feel steadier, such as grounding strategies, routines, or small actions that reduce distress
- People you can contact for support, including friends, family or carers
- Services to reach out to if you feel unsafe, such as mental health triage, crisis lines or emergency care

Safety plans work best when they are written in your own words, simple and realistic, and easy to access when you need them. They can change over time as your needs change.

If you don't already have a safety plan or would like to update one, you can use **SANE's My Safety Plan template in RecoveryClub**. Some people also find the **Beyond Now safety planning app** helpful, which allows you to create and update a safety plan on your phone or computer.

You don't have to have everything figured out before you start. Even a basic safety plan is a good place to begin.