

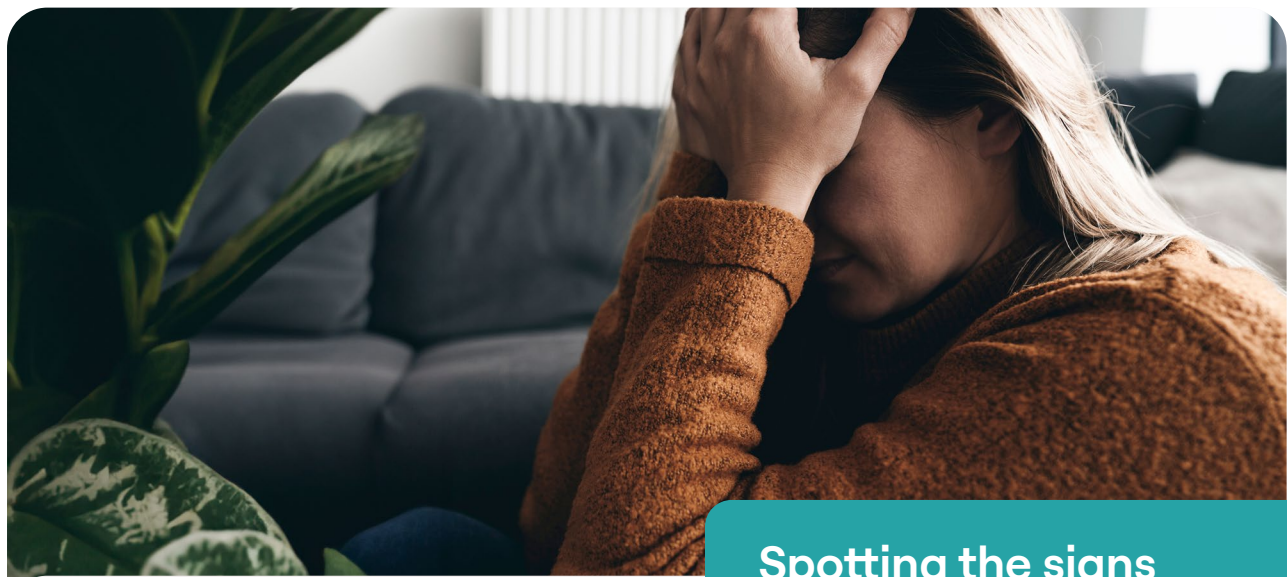
World Suicide Prevention Day 2023: Spot the signs and save a life



Suicide is a global health issue that affects people from all walks of life. **World Suicide Prevention Day**, observed annually on **10th September**, provides us with an opportunity to raise awareness about suicide and mental health, empowering us to help save lives.

Understanding the depth of the issue

Before we can begin to tackle this issue, it's important to grasp the scale and severity of the problem. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that every year, close to **800,000 people** take their own life. That's **one person every 40 seconds**. Suicide is a complex issue, often occurring because of a combination of various factors including psychological, social, and cultural ones.



Spotting the signs

Some people keep suicidal thoughts and ideas secret, and many suicides can occur without any warning. Those bereaved by suicide are often left feeling guilty and berate themselves for not having spotted the signs sooner.

However there's evidence to support there are so-called '**minimal warning**' groups, especially among children and young people.

While it's true that everyone's experience with mental health is unique, there are some common warning signs that can indicate someone might be struggling. These may include:

- 1. Change in behaviour:** A person considering suicide might become socially withdrawn, lose interest in activities they previously enjoyed, or experience changes in sleeping or eating habits.
- 2. Emotional distress:** They may seem unusually sad, anxious, irritable, or exhibit feelings of hopelessness and despair.
- 3. Verbal cues:** Listen out for phrases like "I can't go on" or "I just want it all to end". These could indicate that someone is contemplating suicide.
- 4. Preparatory actions:** This could include giving away possessions, settling affairs, or saying goodbye to loved ones.
- 5. Signs of self-harm:** Unexplained physical injuries could be a sign of self-harm, often associated with severe emotional distress.

It's important to remember that these signs are not definitive proof that someone is contemplating suicide. But they should never be ignored.

Reaching out and offering support

If you spot these signs in someone you know, it's crucial to reach out and offer support. This might feel daunting, but remember, you don't have to be a mental health professional to help. **Here are a few ways to start:**



1. Start a conversation

It's okay to express your concerns. Use open-ended questions to encourage them to share how they're feeling.



2. Be non-judgemental

Make sure to listen without offering advice or judgement. Validation of their feelings can go a long way.



3. Encourage professional help

Encourage them to reach out to a mental health professional. You could offer to help them find resources or accompany them to a session.



4. Stay connected

Check in regularly. This could be a simple text or call to let them know you're there.

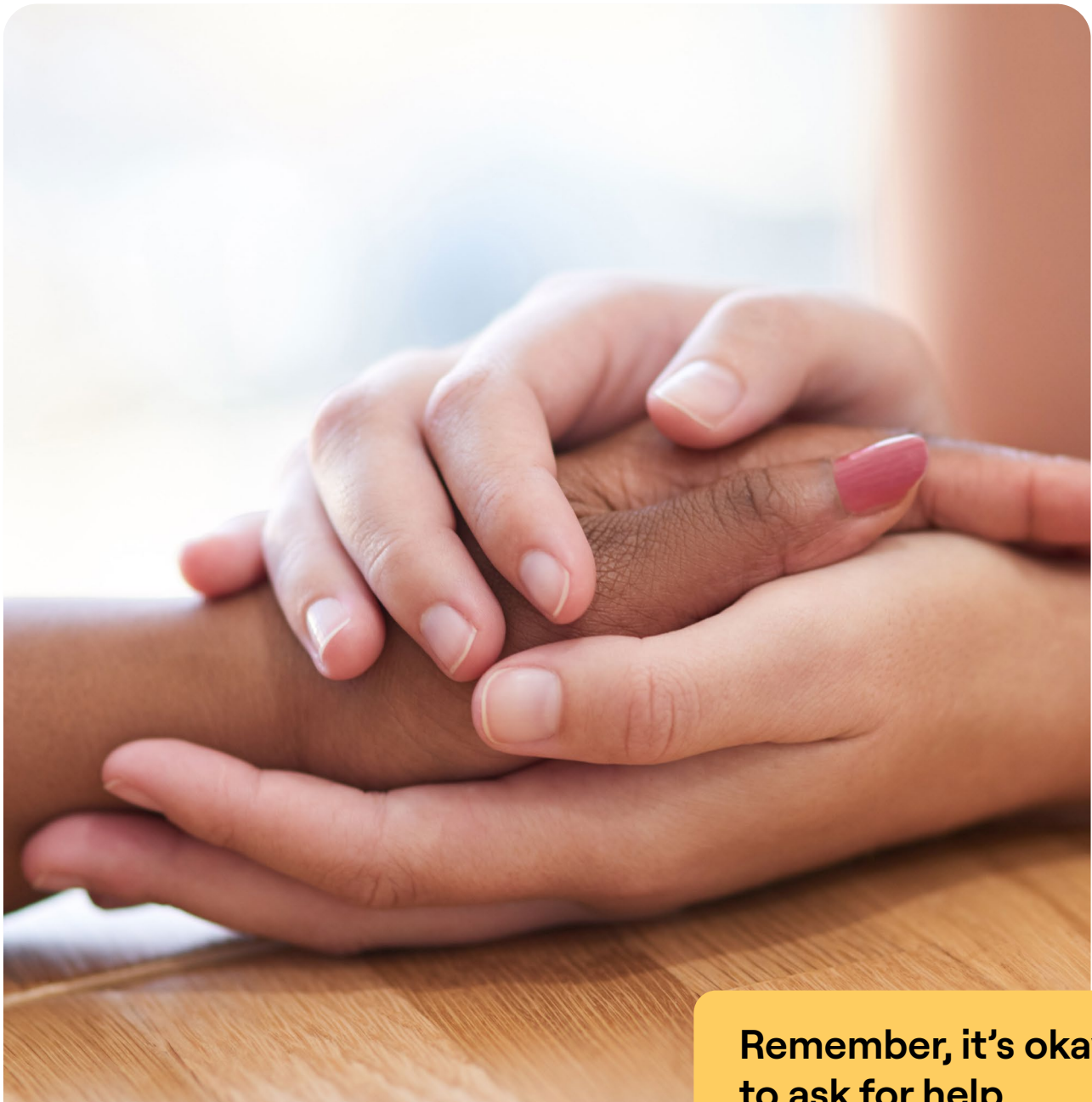
Remember, if you believe someone is in immediate danger, **don't hesitate to contact the emergency services.**



Professional help and resources

The person experiencing suicidal thoughts has the most influence on the prevention of suicide. Mental health charity Mind has several effective tips for coping with these thoughts if they arise.

In the UK, several organisations offer support for those struggling with suicidal thoughts. Samaritans (116 123) provides a 24/7 helpline for anyone who needs to talk. **CALM (0800 58 58 58)** offers support to men specifically, while **Papyrus (0800 068 4141)** is dedicated to preventing young suicide.



Remember, it's okay to ask for help

If you or someone you know is experiencing suicidal thoughts, it's crucial to remember that help is available, and it's okay to reach out. Contact a **mental health professional** or a **trusted person in your life** and express how you're feeling. In emergency situations, dial your country's emergency number immediately.

For more guidance and advice contact **HealthHero** today.
