

What should I do?

If you or someone you know has thoughts of suicide or have engaged in any form of suicide related behaviour, seek help immediately. Contact your local Medical Centre, Psychologist, Social Worker, Chaplain or the Duty Officer/Officer of the Day. You do not have to deal with this alone. Alternatively, contact the All Hours Support Line on 1800 628 036.

Provide AID

- A ASK directly and don't be afraid to ask
– 'are you thinking of killing yourself'
- I INTERVENE – immediately
- D Don't keep it a secret

Secure LIFE

- L LOCATE HELP
- I INFORM – chain of command
- F FIND – someone to stay with the person
- E EXPEDITE – get help immediately

Resources

You! Become suicide aware. For further information regarding the ADF suicide training available in your local area please contact your Regional Mental Health Team convener via your psychology support section or the Directorate of Mental Health email: DMH.mentalhealth@defence.gov.au

Mental Health Resources

Local Medical Centres Your local medical officer can provide immediate assistance and referrals as required.

Psychology Support Section All Psychology Support Sections offer after-hours, critical incident support through the local Duty Officer/Officer of the Day.

Defence Community Organisation

<http://intranet.defence.gov.au/dco/> or www.defence.gov.au/dco/

The DCO provides services 24 hours a day, 7 days a week all year round including public holidays. During normal business hours the first point of call is the Duty Social Worker or Military Support Officer. Outside these core hours and on Public Holidays, calls should be directed to the National Welfare Coordination Centre (NWCC) on 1800 801 026 or if calling from overseas +61 2 93594842.

Chaplains There are Chaplains connected to all units in Australia who can provide support and appropriate referrals.

The Family Information Network for Defence (FIND) (1800 020 031)

FIND is a phone service that provides easy access to personnel information on matters of everyday interest and concern. It is a confidential service that is available to every Service person and family anywhere in Australia.

Lifeline (131 114) If you, or a friend, need to talk to someone about a problem immediately, you can call Lifeline for the cost of a local call.

Veterans and Veteran's Families Counselling Service (VACS) This service is available to veterans of all deployments and their families. VETLINE – 24 hour emergency line (1800 011 046).

ADF Mental Health Strategy All-hours Support Line (ASL) The ASL is a confidential telephone triage support service for ADF members and their families that is available 24 hours a day, 7 days per week. (1800 628 036) (FREECALL within Australia) and (61 2 9425 3878) (outside Australia)

Australian Defence Force Mental Health Strategy (ADFMHS)

Defweb Address <http://intranet.defence.gov.au/dsg/sites/dmh/>
Internet Address www.defence.gov.au/health/DMH/i-dmh.htm
Email DMH.mentalhealth@defence.gov.au



Australian Government
Department of Defence

ADF Mental Health Strategy

SUICIDE

be well

work well

live well

The one thing that will save a human life is a human relationship

Although suicide remains a relatively uncommon event, it is still a tragic loss of life with devastating consequences for families, work mates/colleagues and the organisation in general.

Intervening with people who have thoughts of suicide or who have engaged in suicide related behaviour is possible. However, it does require a determined and focused commitment from all members of the ADF.

Suicide is a difficult subject but it is everyone's business!

What makes a person engage in suicide behaviour(s)?

ALMOST ANYTHING can lead to thoughts of suicide or to suicide related behaviour. It depends upon HOW THE PERSON FEELS ABOUT IT!

Everyone has different levels of tolerance to stress and pain and we all try to cope as best we can during significant, and sometimes painful changes in our lives.

However, sometimes the burden of pain and suffering can be so great that an individual is overwhelmed to a point where he/she loses their usual effective coping ability. Suicide may seem to be an option at this point but life can also be chosen and usually will be if someone is there to help them sort out the problems.

While there is no 'typical' profile for someone who may contemplate suicide, there are some common risk factors and signs that we all need to be aware of in an effort to save lives. Some of these factors and signs include (this is not an exhaustive list):

- any perceived significant losses (death of a loved one, pet, loss of a relationship)
- feelings of helplessness and hopelessness
- lack of current and accessible social supports that the person is willing to use
- mental health concerns
- past history of suicide related behaviour
- emotional pain that does not seem to have an end.

What should I look for?

Risk factors and signs are simply those things that alert us to the possibility that someone may be thinking about suicide. If we see or hear risk factors, they are an opportunity for us to ask if the person is thinking of suicide. Asking does not increase the likelihood of suicide.

People can become very frightened if they see these signs, but it's vital to remember that signs may be an attempt by a person at risk of suicide to communicate that they are not coping and that they are overwhelmed by intense emotional pain. This pain is often associated with stressful events and/or loss.

Signs may appear as changes in a person's situation, their behaviour(s), physical state, thoughts, and/or emotions/feelings.

These may include (this is not an exhaustive list):

- talk or hints of suicide behaviour
- preoccupation with death
- giving away possessions
- isolation or withdrawal
- increased alcohol and/or drug use
- lack of interest in hobbies or appearance

The supervisor's role in suicide prevention/intervention

- be suicide aware so that you can identify personnel at risk
- actively support suicide intervention efforts and recognise that suicide prevention/intervention requires effort from all members of the ADF
- be aware of the resources that can assist your people
- take all thoughts of suicide and suicide related behaviour(s) seriously
- enhance the development of 'esprit de corp' in the work place by:
 - building a work unit culture that fosters both a sense of belonging and 'looking after your mates'
 - offering social support
 - developing a culture that encourages early intervention and supports those seeking help.