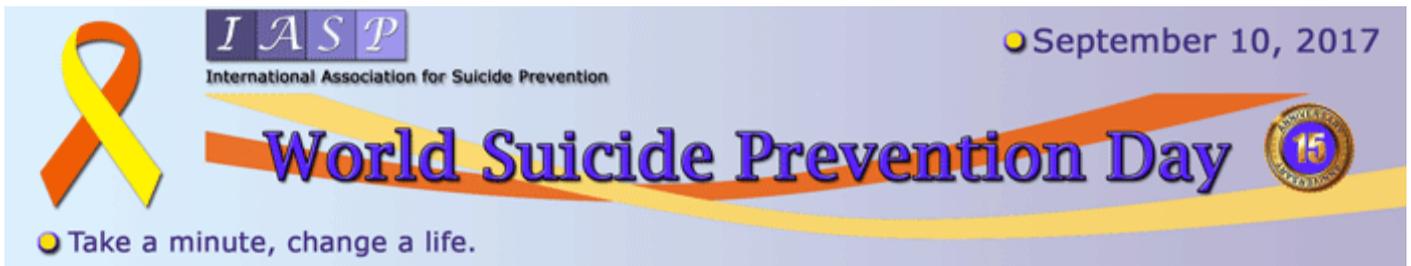


Suicide Prevention

World Suicide Prevention Day – “Take a Minute, Change a Life”



The message for World Suicide Prevention Day on 10 September 2017 is “take a minute, change a life”.

It is a message of hope, the importance of connecting with others, how we can all help to keep someone safe by reaching out and how vulnerable people can reach out to those they trust to help keep them safe.

We need more messages of hope, encouraging help-seeking, where to go for help, how to support vulnerable loved ones, and how to help build resiliency.

The International Association for Suicide Prevention’s (IASP) message is:

As members of communities, it is our responsibility to look out for those who may be struggling, check in with them, and encourage them to tell their story in their own way and at their own pace. Offering a gentle word of support and listening in a non-judgemental way can make all the difference.

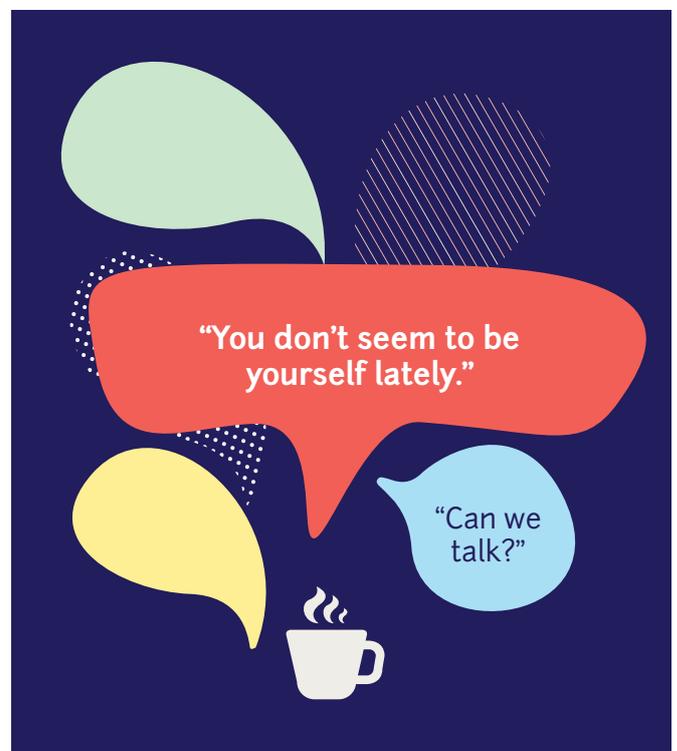
Here are some very practical ways to take a minute and help friends, family and even strangers:

Talk

- Connect with people, go out for coffee and ask them about what is happening in their life and how they are getting on. Connection and conversation with loved ones is a key aspect to helping those who are vulnerable to suicide. We know that sharing, bringing hope, caring and compassion helps us all feel good about our world.
- It is okay to ask someone if they are suicidal. If you suspect that they are, if your gut feeling tells you ‘something does not feel right’, or you know that they are suicidal, asking them something like “what you have just talked about sounds pretty hard to cope with right now; sometimes people in those kind of situations start thinking about suicide - are you thinking about killing yourself?’ will not trigger something. If they say ‘yes’,

you can guide them to people who can support them and keep them safe, and it is a helpful and safe thing to do. Many people fear that asking about suicide will have a negative impact on the vulnerable person, but it is these conversations that can really help. People who have lived through a suicide attempt often say they desperately wanted someone to ask if they were okay. They often reflect, however, that no one asked. Knowing that someone cares and is there to support them can make all the difference.

- When talking to someone who is suicidal, use presuppositional language - talk about when they get through this part of their life, what things will have made the difference for them, and treat it as something that they will overcome.



[Worried About Someone?](#)

Listen

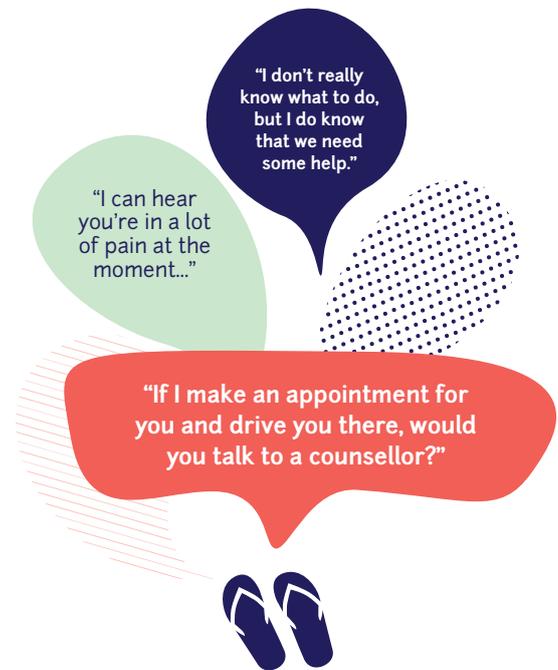
- Often, suicidal people are looking for someone to ask them how they are, and they do really want to talk to someone about what they are feeling. Once you have asked them the question, it is important to listen to them, to hear them out in a caring and comforting environment.
- Stigma around suicide plays a large role in why people do not reach out for help. If you are talking to someone about suicide, they need you to listen without judgment. Suicide is often a response to trauma. The people having these thoughts cannot see another way out of their current situation, but there is always another, better option than suicide. Let them talk about how they are feeling in a way that they feel understood and not judged. Understand that it is their life's journey to date that has made them conclude suicide is an option. They just need more options, skills and people they can trust to get them through this bad patch.



[Worried About Someone?](#)

Seek Further Help

- It is okay to ask for help. If you are feeling suicidal, there are a lot of resources available to help support you and help you through this time in your life. Friends and family can support you.
- If you know someone who is suicidal, it is safe for you to talk to them and offer help. You do not need to be an expert, you just need to provide that caring connection that allows them to feel safe and understood, and wherever possible, accompany them to services that can help them.
- As a family member or friend, you can use a [Safety Plan](#) working in trust alongside a vulnerable person to help guide them to a safer place and give them the tools to get there.



[Worried About Someone?](#)

There are a number of suicide prevention pathways available to people in the southern district. See the following links for a comprehensive list for [Dunedin](#), [Invercargill](#), [Wakatipu](#) and [Central](#).

Focus on wellbeing - the [Mental Health Foundation's 5 Way](#) to Wellbeing is an excellent, practical tool.

Just remember that while we can always, and need to, do better to support vulnerable people, our community services, from first responders like St John, the police, a huge range of community NGOs, victim support, school counsellors, community ,our postvention groups to mental health services, do an amazing job helping to keep people safe every day.

Suicide prevention is a whole of community affair from family/whānau support, neighbourhoods, schools, workplaces, counsellors etc to mental health services – we are all in this together to keep our vulnerable community members safe.

[Paul Martin](#)
Suicide Prevention Coordinator
WellSouth