

## South Australia

Suicide is one of the largest killers in Australia and yet it remains hidden and rarely talked about. Over the last 20 years suicide has claimed the lives of approximately 2,500 Australians a year.

At this level, suicide claims more lives than the national road toll, assaults and murders and more than Australia's 'national' cancer – skin cancer.

In South Australia alone we lose approximately 192 lives each year, while nationally we lose an average of 7 lives each day.

**To help prevent this tragic toll, we must learn how to respond to those in need.**

### Get to know the signs and how to help

**Sign 1:** Discussing a desire for suicide, 'ending it' or plans to take one's own life.

**Sign 2:** Feelings of hopelessness, helplessness or worthlessness, including feeling that others would be 'better off if I'm not around'.

**Sign 3:** A sharp decline or change in mood and 'not acting like themselves' – this can also coincide with a decline in seeking social interactions and job absenteeism.

**Sign 4:** A number of mood identifiers such as: depression, insomnia, anxiety, panic attacks and impaired concentration and loss of rational thinking often accompany suicidal ideation or attempts.

**Sign 5:** A desire to 'tie up loose ends' – the compiling of a will or the sudden distribution of belongings to friends and family.

**Sign 6:** Increased and unusual risky behaviour including destructive drug and alcohol use.

**Sign 7:** Recent traumatic events or losses that create unresolved distress.

**Sign 8:** A mental illness combined with other signs.

**Sign 9:** A recent or past attempt to take their own life or harm themselves.

**Every situation is different, but one or a combination of these signs may be indicative of imminent risk. Rather than avoid the issue, start a conversation. You could save a life.**

**VISIT [WWW.WSPD.ORG.AU](http://WWW.WSPD.ORG.AU)  
TO FIND OUT MORE AND TO ACCESS OUR RESOURCES**

## How to help:

- Let them know your concern.
- Ask the person if they are suicidal. They may be relieved that they can talk to you about it.
- Listen without judgement.
- Sensitively advise them to get professional help, support them through that process.
- Provide personal support.
- Get further information and support for them and yourself from a GP, psychologist, crisis service, friends, family or the internet.
- If someone is at imminent risk call your local mental health emergency team or '000'.

## Seven Facts about Suicide

**Fact #1:** Suicide results from intense psychological pain.

**Fact #2:** People who talk about suicide are at serious risk and should be taken seriously.

**Fact #3:** People often give signs before they attempt suicide. Get to know these signs so that you can recognise risk.

**Fact #4:** Suicide can affect anyone regardless of age, gender, income, relationship status, education or ethnicity.

**Fact #5:** Talking about suicide with a person will not put them at risk.

**Fact #6:** Suicide is preventable and people can fully recover after feeling suicidal.

**Fact #7:** A person who has attempted suicide once may be at risk of doing it again.

## What is South Australia doing to support and prevent suicide

South Australia has embedded suicide prevention into the Stepping Up: A Social Inclusion Action Plan for Mental Health Reform 2007 – 2012. However recognising suicide prevention as an issue in need of its own policy direction, a South Australian suicide prevention strategy is currently in development through the office of the State Chief Psychiatrist.

To get involved in the consultation process for this strategy, email Lynne James at: [lynne.james@health.sa.gov.au](mailto:lynne.james@health.sa.gov.au) .

## How to get help and support in South Australia

### Lifeline:

As one of the most trusted organisations in Australia, Lifeline provides access to a range of crisis support, suicide prevention and mental health support services. Their core support service (13 11 14) is available 24 hours 7 days a week.

Find more information at: [www.lifeline.org.au](http://www.lifeline.org.au)

### MensLine Australia:

A professional telephone support, information and referral service for men specialising in family and relationship concerns. The service is available from anywhere in Australia for the cost of a local call, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Find more information by calling 1300 78 99 78

### Mental Illness Fellowship of South Australia:

MIFSA is the largest specialist mental health organisation in South Australia. MIFSA offers a diverse range of programs and services for people living with mental illness, carers and the community.

More information at: [www.mifa.org.au/mifsa](http://www.mifa.org.au/mifsa)

### Headspace:

Is the national youth mental health foundation. They help young people who are going through a tough time and offer a range of health, counselling and information services.

Find more information at: [www.headspace.org.au](http://www.headspace.org.au)

