

How to stay safe

Things you should know about having a mental health crisis and about suicide



A mental health crisis looks different for everyone. Part of a crisis can be thinking about harming yourself or ending your life.

Whatever challenges you are going through, you deserve help.

Experiencing thoughts and feelings about suicide

Sometimes people experience so much hurt that they no longer feel like living.

Some may have thoughts of wanting to end their life (suicidal ideation), without having a plan to do so.

Others may be planning to end their life (suicidal intent).

If you have any of these experiences, it is important to reach out for help, even though that may feel hard to do. You can seek help from a trusted family member, a friend, another supportive person or a mental health service.

Feelings you may be having and tips to keep you safe

Sometimes a crisis happens all at once. Sometimes it builds over along period due to a number of difficult events in your life.

In a mental health crisis, you may feel different things. These can include feeling overwhelmed, low or suicidal. We talk about these types of feelings below.

“I am feeling overwhelmed...”

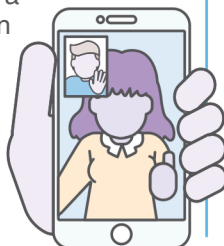
Sometimes our emotions can be overwhelming. Overwhelming feelings can include sadness, anger, shame, anxiety, guilt and hopelessness, or lots of different feelings at once.

If you feel this way, it can help to practise self-care. For example, you could:

journal about your feelings or things you are grateful for



call a trusted friend or family member to talk about your feelings, or just as a distraction



help yourself to relax by doing activities like listening to music, taking a bath or meditating



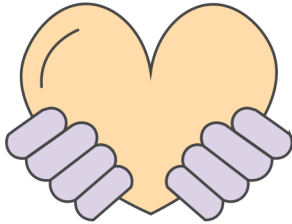
go for a walk or do some exercise.



“I am feeling low...”

Feeling low is more than just feeling sad. You may feel hopeless, depressed, irritable or numb. You might also find it hard to do activities you used to enjoy, find it hard to maintain your relationships, or experience changes in your sleeping or eating patterns.

If you feel this way, you can:



try self-care techniques
(like the ones
mentioned earlier)

connect with a mental health service, like a help line or walk-in counselling service. If you feel you need more support, ask for help connecting with long-term services.



“I am having thoughts of suicide...”

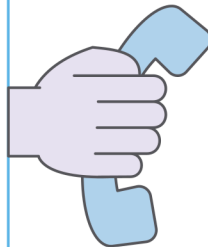
Whatever the cause of these feelings, your pain is valid. **Feeling that you want to end your life can be caused by a number of different things, such as:**

- a buildup of emotions over time
- pain that you feel you can no longer tolerate
- a sudden event or trigger—for example, if someone you love has died by suicide.

If you have these thoughts or feelings, it is really important to reach out for help. You can:

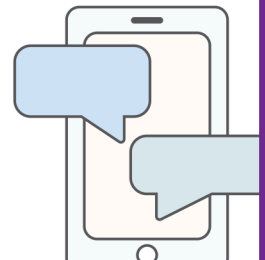


use your comfort or safety plan, if you have one – or ask a mental health service for help in creating one



call a trusted friend, family member or caregiver

reach out to a mental health service, such as calling or texting a crisis line.



If you are experiencing thoughts of suicide, you are deserving of help. Please explore resources at www.camh.ca/gethelp. If you feel safe in the moment, follow up with your family physician or care team.

If you require immediate, in-person emergency care, call 911, or go to your nearest emergency department.

It can be difficult to have these feelings, but taking the first step and reaching out can make a difference in your life.