

Talking to someone about suicidal thoughts and feelings can be extremely difficult. If you are unsure whether someone is suicidal, the best way to find out is to ask them if they are thinking about suicide. This shows you care and they are not alone. It allows the other person to talk about their feelings and plans – the first step to getting help.

The following flow chart provides JCU staff with a guide to support someone who may be at risk of suicide. If you are not with the person, obtain details about their current situation and whereabouts (including phone number).

In case of an emergency, call 000. For more assistance at any point in this process call the QLD Health Acute Care Team on 1300 642 255 or Suicide Call Back 1300 659 467.

Step 1 – Start a conversation

A helpful way to start the conversation is by checking in on them: “I wanted to check in with you because you haven’t seemed yourself lately” OR “I’m really worried about you and what you said/wrote in your email/the message you left”.

Sometimes people can say things like: “I’ve had enough” OR “I can’t take this anymore”.

If there are signs that the person may be suicidal, progress to asking directly about suicidal thinking.

Step 2 – Enquire directly about suicidal thoughts

“Are you having thoughts about suicide?” OR “Are you thinking about killing yourself?”

NO

“No I am not”,
“Not for a long time”

People can experience extreme distress or despair without thinking about self-harm or suicide.

It is still important to offer support and referral options.

Let the person know that there are a number of services that can provide support.

Consider problems and solutions – refer to JCU and external services that may be able to assist.

YES

This person is experiencing a mental health crisis and needs to be referred to a specialist mental health support.

Step 3 – Determine Urgency

Progress to asking questions to determine the urgency of the situation.

- Do you have a suicide plan?
- Have you identified a method?
- Have you identified when you may act on a suicide plan?
- Are you currently using drugs or alcohol?
- Have you started taking steps to secure the means to end your life?

If the person answers **NO** to all of the above, or risk is clearly not imminent. e.g. “I’ll kill myself if I fail again” then support and referral to mental health care is needed. **SUPPORT THE STUDENT TO MAKE AN APPOINTMENT with a GP, JCU student counselling, headspace, or Head to Health for TIMELY MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT**

If the person answers **YES** to any of the above, take action. If answers indicate imminent risk and active suicide plans: Let the person know that you need to get help, stay with them until support arrives – if the person leaves or hangs up, call 000 and request Police do a welfare check.

Step 4 – Referral Options

Students Only: JCU Counselling Service: 1800 246 446

Staff Only: call Telus Health: 1800 604 640

Alternatively:

GP

Lifeline: 13 11 14

Beyond Blue: 1300 224 636

Suicide Call Back Service: 1300 659 467

Headspace: 1800 650 890

Head to Health: 1800 595 212

13YARN: 13 92 76

Emergency Services: 000

Acute Care Team: 1300 642 255

JCU Security: +15555 (JCU Security must be advised if an ambulance is called to campus)

When making a referral, state the following: “Hello, I’m _____ from _____, I have a person with me who is at **HIGH RISK OF SUICIDE**”

See over for further guidance and support

Taking care of yourself

Supporting someone who has suicidal thoughts and behaviours can take a lot of time and emotional energy. You may find yourself worried and preoccupied about the person and this can be physically and emotionally exhausting. It is important to maintain your own wellbeing and have a range of strategies in place that you can use if you are feeling stressed or overwhelmed. For staff, the Employee Assistance Helpline 1800 604 640 and Telus Health website www.telushealth.com/en-au provide further information and support. Students can access the JCU Counselling Service by emailing studentwellbeing@jcu.edu.au or visiting www.jcu.edu.au/sew

Useful information when talking to a suicidal person

Do:

- **Be yourself.** Let the person know you care, that they are not alone
- **Listen.** Let the suicidal person unload despair, vent anger
- **Be sympathetic,** non-judgmental, patient, calm, accepting
- **Take the person seriously**
- **Be mindful of your role as a staff/student and your boundaries.** Be clear to the person that you are supporting about your role and don't commit to being the only person someone at risk contacts. Encourage them to get support from professional mental health services or attend the hospital if required.
- **Remember privacy of the suicidal person,** be respectful and do not gossip

Don't:

- **Argue with the suicidal person.** Avoid saying things like: "You have so much to live for," "Your suicide will hurt your family," or "Look on the bright side."
- **Act shocked or make value judgements.** Don't lecture on the value of life or say that suicide is wrong
- **Promise confidentiality.** Refuse to be sworn to secrecy

Community Mental Health Services

The following support services are available to everyone:

- **Lifeline Australia** provides a 24 hour phone crisis support service to anyone at anytime. Lifeline also provides information and training for family and friends of people at risk of suicide.
Phone: 13 11 14 Website: www.lifeline.org.au
- **Suicide Call Back Service** is a 24-hour, 7 days a week phone crisis counselling service for people at risk of suicide, carers of someone who is suicidal and those bereaved by suicide. You can also access up to 6 sessions of counselling with the same counsellor at times scheduled to suit you, if you don't already have professional support. Website also provides access to a suicide safety planning app
Phone: 1300 659 467 Website: www.suicidecallbackservice.org.au
- **Beyond Blue** provides a 24-hour phone crisis support as well as information and resources for o help everyone in Australia achieve their best possible mental health, whatever their age and wherever they live. The website also provides access to a suicide safety planning app and templates.
Phone: 1300 224 636 Website: www.beyondblue.org.au
- **Queensland Health Acute Care Team** are the first point of contact to public mental health services 24-hours a day, 7 days a week. Following triage, they facilitate the most appropriate type of care – inpatient, community or crisis interventions.
Phone: 1300 642 255

Student Wellbeing and Counselling Service (on-campus support for students)

The Student Wellbeing and Counselling Service provides an emergency appointment each day. You can contact the service on 1800 246 446 to check if the emergency appointment is still available. The Service is open Monday to Friday from 9am to 4pm.