

# LET'S TALK

## about suicide prevention

**Stop saying "I'm fine" if you're not**

Easier said as done...

Sometimes we are the last people to notice that our own behaviours or moods have changed or that there is lots going on in our lives. Stressful situations or big life events can take a while to catch us up – we might not even notice that things are maybe not fine or that we are feeling differently.

When someone asks us if we are okay we might feel the easiest thing to do is say "I'm fine" because there might be a can of worms lurking that you don't want to open, never mind acknowledge. When things happen or we feel like we can't cope it's almost built into us to keep on going and avoid what we see as failure – a failure to cope or a failure to be strong or a failure to pull your socks up.

The thing is, acknowledging that things are not fine is not admitting that you are a failure. Ask yourself - does hiding from problems or feelings make them go away?

The scariest thing to do is to say something's not right. It's scary because we are worried about what will then happen. That bit is the hardest bit. That is the first big hurdle you will have to cross. Once you have crossed that there will be other hurdles but coping with them may actually be easier than hiding them.

There is no shame in saying "I'm not fine". There is no shame in asking for help. And yes, it is easier said as done – but better that as to ignore it.

*If you are feeling suicidal it is very important for you to talk to someone and tell them how you are feeling. This could be a family member, a friend, a health professional, a helpline, whoever you feel comfortable talking to. If you are at high risk of killing yourself right now you should contact the emergency services (999) immediately.*

# You may have noticed a change in the way a loved one or a friend is behaving. What can you do to help?

If your friend had an accident and broke their leg the first time you saw them you would ask how they are, maybe what happened and if there was anything you could do to help. Why is it that when we are aware that someone is maybe having a difficult time of things or that we notice they are quieter than usual or not going out that we are scared to ask how they are? Is it really that different to them breaking their leg?

Of course you can see a broken leg. When we are worried about somebody's mental health we are reliant on our personal hunches. These hunches are scary, what if the person we are worried about reacts badly if we share our concerns? A reply of "I'm fine" when you ask if someone is doing okay can leave us not really satisfied that everything is okay and feeling that the conversation is closed. What scares us most about starting that conversation in the first place is the fear they may say they're not fine. In that situation what do you do?

It's really important to remember that you don't have to be an expert on mental health to talk to someone; In the same way that you are not an expert on broken bones! Just asking someone how they are can make a difference because they will know that you are thinking about them and that you care. By just listening then you can help them to open up and get help.

**If you are concerned for a loved one or a friend please encourage them to seek help through their local GP or one of the following services:**

<b>NHS 24</b>	<b>111</b>
<b>Lerwick Police</b>	<b>101</b>
<b>NHS Shetland</b>	<b>01595 743000</b>
<b>Samaritans</b>	<b>08457 90 90 90</b>
<b>Breathing Space</b>	<b>0800 83 85 87</b>
<b>HOPEline UK</b>	<b>0800 068 41 41</b>

**If your friend or loved one is in immediate danger right now you should contact the emergency services (999) immediately.**

From 7th September to 13th September Mind Your Head and Choose Life are touring a roadshow called 'Let's talk about suicide prevention' to coincide with suicide prevention awareness week. Check local press for further information or visit [www.mindyourhead.org.uk](http://www.mindyourhead.org.uk)