



North Ayrshire Council
Comhairle Siorrachd Àir a Tuath



NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

Education and Youth Employment



SUICIDE PREVENTION AND RESPONSE TOOLKIT

getting
it right
for every child



INDEX

Choose Life - Risk and Protective Factors	
Choose Life - Possible Warning Signs	
Conversation Starters	
Connecting Mental Health - Glow Tile	
Digital Resources to Support Young People's Mental Health and Wellbeing	
Headspace - If your friend is not okay	
Choose Life - What to Do, Where to Go, How to Survive	
Childline - various 'Talking to Childline Isn't'	
SMHFA Information - Educational Psychology	
Penumbra - Advice on how to use Penumbra's Safety Plan	
Penumbra - Safety Plan	
Choose Life - Training Information - Suicide Prevention - North Ayrshire	
SafeTALK in Schools	
Suicide Awareness - 17/3/16 - Garnock Academy	
Sample Letter - October Break	
Choose Life - Talking to Young People	
YoungMinds - Useful Contacts	
Key Resource - Samaritans - Step by Step - Checklist for Death by Suicide	
Specific Issues of Concern for a Death by Suicide	
Key Resource - Samaritans - Step by Step - Checklist and Support Information	
Help When We Need It Most	
Step by Step - Information for Staff	
Choose Life - North Ayrshire - How to talk about Suicide (for adults working with young people)	
Sample - Appendix 3	
Change and Loss - A4 Poster	
Change and Loss - Activity Booklet (Primary)	
Change and Loss - Activity Booklet (Secondary)	
Change and Loss - Teachers	
Change and Loss - Parents	
Change and Loss - A5 Booklet	
Bereavement Organisations	
Step by Step - Information for Students	
Step by Step - Information for Parents and Carers	
NHS Education for Scotland - Talking to children who are bereaved	
Richmond's Hope - After a Suicide	
Touched by Suicide	
SAMH - After a Suicide	
Occupational Health Referral Form	
Occupational Health Assessment Employee Form	

DRAFT

This pack is designed to complement the NAC Critical Incident Policy in the case of a death by suicide of a pupil, ex-pupil or staff member

It provides enhanced information and tools for supporting staff, pupils and parents

- Please feel free to photocopy anything
- Please contact Choose Life Manager / Educational Psychologist for further copies of any material
- Please contact the Choose Life Manager if you wish to develop / discuss any specific issues or bespoke approaches

Risk and Protective Factors

Factors that can increase risk

- Loneliness and a lack of trusted friends
- Substance misuse and alcohol problems within the family
- Previous suicide attempts and self-harm (including a family history of suicide)
- Experience of abuse which could be sexual, physical and or emotional
- Low self-esteem, lack of confidence
- Not achieving educational potential and lacking life and interpersonal skills
- Life crises such as bereavement or issues relating to sexual orientation
- Mental health disorder, such as depressive disorder, obsessive compulsive disorder or a psychotic illness
- Inability to access appropriate services and support at times of need
- Late evenings and night times are times when looked after children and young people especially may contemplate suicide
- Hearing about or knowing another child or young person who has completed suicide

Protective Factors

- Evidence of having coped well with earlier difficulties
- A sense of hopefulness, reasons for living and optimism
- A sense of having positive health and participation in sporting activity
- Close and healthy family relationships and peer support
- A supportive school environment and relationships
- Good social support
- Religious faith and spirituality
- Access to, and involvement in, health treatment (s)
- Limited access to means (medicines, places and so on)
- A safe caring relationship
- A trusted adult who is available at night as well as during the day

What are possible warning signs?

Many young people who are contemplating suicide will make an attempt to let someone know how they are feeling. Some common signs are:

- Excessive sadness
- Lack of energy or apathy
- Sudden calmness, especially after a period of depression or moodiness
- Choosing to be alone and avoiding friends or social activities
- Losing interest or pleasure in activities the person previously enjoyed
- Changes in appearance, especially neglecting their physical appearance
- Changes in sleep patterns
- Changes in appetite, resulting in weight loss or gain; some people may develop anorexia or bulimia
- Self-harmful behaviour, such as cutting, biting or burning themselves, recklessness, engaging in unsafe sex, getting into fights and increased use of drugs and / or alcohol
- Making preparations, such as beginning to put his or her personal business in order; this might include visiting friends and family members, giving away personal possessions, and cleaning up his or her room or home; some people will write a note before attempting suicide
- Talking about suicide

Although most people will give off warning signs or invite invitations for help, some will not. Also, carers may not be around the child or young person for long enough periods of time to assess any changes in behaviour. Asking the young person how they are feeling may help them to say how they are feeling. A carer who suspects that the child or young person may be having thoughts of suicide should ask them.

CONVERSATION STARTERS

Asking about suicide saves lives but it can be hard to know where to start or how to help.

Below are some example conversation starters if you are worried about someone.

It can be scary, hard or painful to talk about suicide – but we need to. Suicidal feelings don't have to end in suicide. Many young people feel really isolated with their thoughts of suicide and do not feel that they are able to tell anyone. Evidence shows that talking about suicide does not make it more likely to happen – it reduces the stigma and is often the first step in a person's recovery.

Talking about suicide does not make it more likely to happen.

Ask them directly 'Are you thinking about suicide?' By using the word suicide, you are telling the young person that it's OK to talk openly about their thoughts of suicide with you.

"Sometimes, when people are feeling the way you are they think about suicide. Is that what you're thinking about?"

"Are you telling me you want to kill yourself? End your life? Die? Die by suicide?"

"It sounds like you're thinking about suicide, is that right?"

"It sounds like life feels too hard for you right now and you want to kill yourself, is that right?"

If someone is suicidal, listen to them and allow them to express their feelings. They may feel a huge sense of relief that someone is willing to hear their darkest thoughts.

"It sounds as though things are really hard at the moment.... Can you tell me a bit more?"

"Things must be so painful for you to feel like there is no way out. I want to listen and help."

"Take your time and tell me what's happening for you at the moment."

"I am so sorry you're feeling this way. Can you tell me more about how you are feeling?"

"Can you tell me more about why you want to die?"

"What has brought you to this place/to feel this way?"

"It's hard and scary to talk about suicide but take your time and I will listen."

Reassure them that they are not alone and you can look for support together.

"It's not uncommon to have thoughts of suicide. With help and support many people can work through these thoughts and stay safe."

"There are organisations that offer support like PAPYRUS HOPELineUK. I can help you find their contact details."

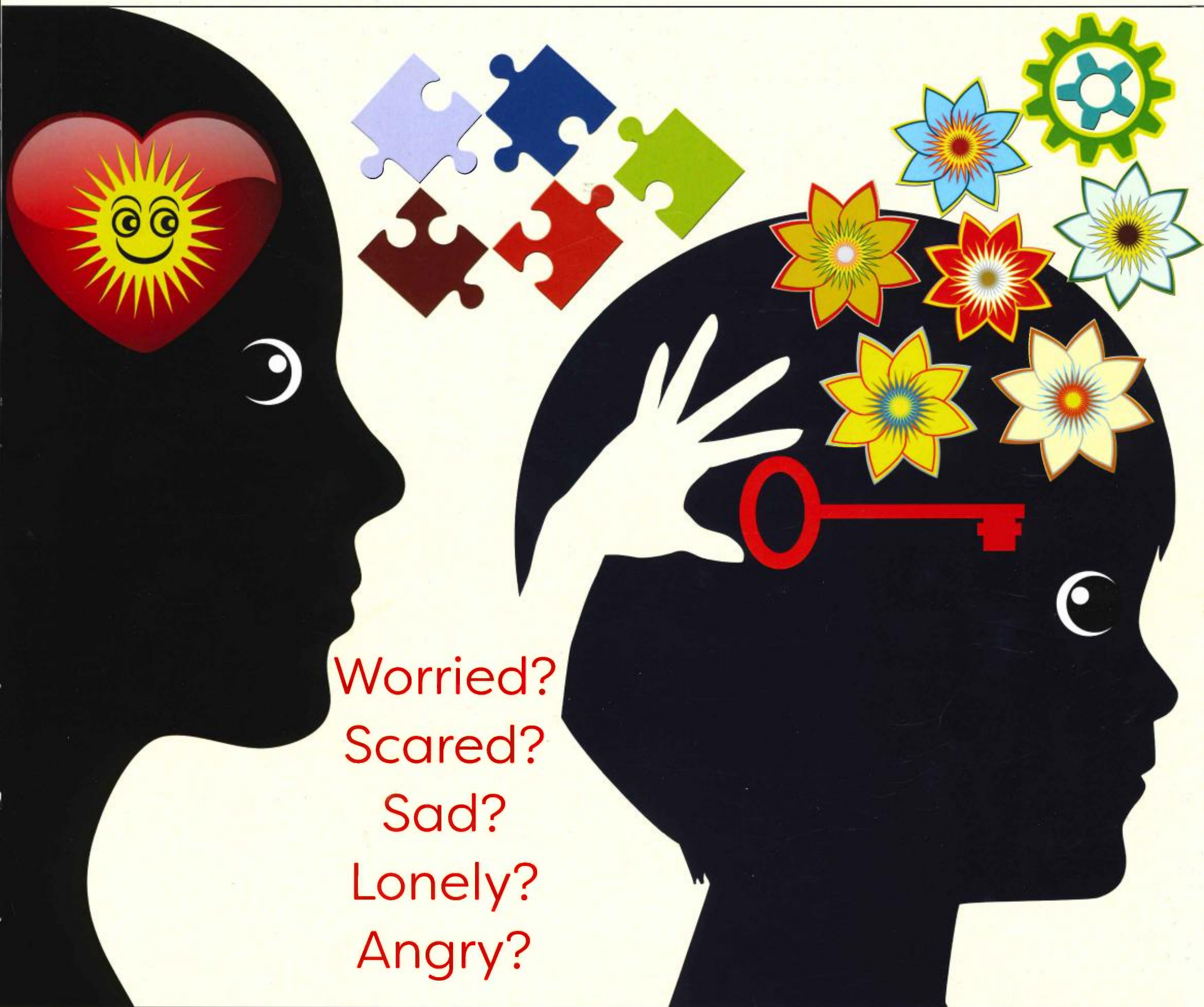
"You've shown a lot of strength in telling me this. I want to help you find support."

"There is hope. There is help available and we can find it together"

Suicide is the biggest killer of young people—male and female—under 35 in the UK. We believe that everyone has a role to play in preventing young suicide. We need to work towards a community where suicide is no longer taboo and young people feel able to tell someone if they feel suicidal and ask for help. **#TalkThroughTheTaboo #WSPD**

CONNECTING WITH MENTAL HEALTH

The new North Ayrshire Council **GLOW** tile with resources and links to help support emotional health and well-being.



Worried?
Scared?
Sad?
Lonely?
Angry?

THERE IS NO HEALTH WITHOUT
MENTAL HEALTH



North Ayrshire Council
Comhairle Siorrachd Àir a Tuath

Digital Resources to Support Young People's Mental Health & Wellbeing

NHS Ayrshire & Arran's Population Mental Health Leadership Group has identified examples of online resources to support mental wellbeing of young people; we do not endorse or recommend particular resources, and encourage you to carefully explore resources before you use them (April 2017)

Apps

Well Mind



WellMind is your free NHS mental health and wellbeing app designed to help you with stress, anxiety and depression. The app includes advice, tips and tools to improve your mental health and boost your wellbeing

Exam Stress



This app is for people who suffer from exam anxiety or from feeling stressed during their studies. The app is developed by the Student Counselling Service, who on a daily basis helps students all over the country with psychological and social problems. It derives from many years of experience in helping students to manage their exam anxiety.

Websites

Hands on Scotland



This Toolkit is a resource for anybody working with or caring for children and young people. It gives practical information and tools to help you respond helpfully to troubling behaviours and to help children and young people to flourish. Available at: http://handsonscotland.co.uk/topics/troubling_behaviours_topic_frameset_list.htm

Aye Mind



Aims to improve the mental health and wellbeing of young people by making better use of the internet, social media and mobile technologies. They are working with young people aged 13 to 21 to create and share a wide range of resources. They are also making a digital toolkit for all who work with young people too, to boost their ability to promote youth wellbeing. Available at: <http://ayemind.com/>

Mind Ed



Offers free, completely open access, online education in over 300 topics. The e-learning is applicable to a wide range of learners across the health, social care, education, criminal justice and community settings. Our aim is to provide simple, clear guidance on children and young people's mental health, wellbeing and development to any adult working with children, young people and families, to help them support the development of young healthy minds. Available at: <https://www.minded.org.uk>

Young Minds



Supports and informs professionals who work with children or young people, whether through paid employment or voluntary work. They provide reliable information about common mental health and behaviour concerns in children and young people: symptoms; possible causes; what you can do to help; other resources and organisations you can contact for support. Available at: http://www.youngminds.org.uk/training_services

Cool Heads



This booklet is especially for young people as they can experience and have to cope with different types of stress than adults. It looks at the kind of things that might be stressful to those aged between 12-16 year olds, and offers advice on how to deal with their feelings. Available at: http://www.healthscotland.com/uploads/documents/1485-CoolHeads_1.pdf

The topics covered by the above websites include:

- Domestic/ Physical Abuse
- Anxiety & Depression
- Bereavement
- Bullying & Cyber Bullying
- Body Image & Eating disorders
- Carers
- Drugs and Alcohol
- Childhood Sexual Abuse and Rape
- LGBT
- Self Harm

Help Lines

Samaritans

Contact free on: 116 123

Visit Website: <http://www.samaritans.org/>

Child line

Contact free on: 0800 1111

Visit Website: <https://childline.org.uk/>

If your friend is not okay...



headspace
National Youth Mental Health Foundation

If your friend is not okay...

Getting help for a friend can take a bit of time and effort but it is worth it. As part of being a good and supportive friend, there are times when we will need to check in with our friends, to ensure that they are okay. Good help will assist your friend to deal with their problems and help them get on with life.



ARE YOU OKAY?

If your friend tells you that they're not okay...

1 Listen and try not to judge or “fix things” straight away – taking the time to listen lets them know that you care and that their feelings are important. If someone has been going through a tough time, it can be a big relief to talk about what has been going on. Listening can be helpful, even without taking any actions, it might just be what they need. And don't panic, the fact that your friend sees something is wrong is a really important first step.

2 Let your friend know that they don't have to go through this on their own and that you are there to help and support them.

3 Some people need ‘time’ or ‘space’ before they're willing to accept help.

Just giving them information about where to get help or providing them with fact sheets can be useful.

4 Suggest they read stories at headspace.org.au about other young people who have made it through difficult times; it may help reduce their feelings of being alone and give them hope for the future.

5 Be honest about why you are worried and ask if anyone else knows about how they are feeling.

6 Encourage them to try some self-help strategies. Things like eating well, exercising, writing feelings down, getting enough sleep, doing things they enjoy and avoiding alcohol and other drugs are just a few self-help tips that your friend could try. (Visit headspace.org.au to download the ‘Tips for a healthy **headspace**’ fact sheet).

7 Don't be too forceful in encouraging self-help activities. It's important to understand that your friend may not feel able to use them because of how they are feeling, or they may not be enough to help them to feel better. If they're interested, you may be able to do some of the strategies with them (e.g. going for a walk, watching their favourite movie).

8 Encourage them to talk to a trusted adult about what is going on and how they are feeling (e.g. a family member, teacher, sports coach).

9 Sometimes, self-help strategies and/or talking to family and friends is not enough and that's okay.

There are a lot of professionals out there who can help. Suggest they make an appointment with their general practitioner (GP) or their nearest **headspace** centre if things don't begin to improve. You could offer to go with them if they need some extra support.

10 Let them know about **eheadspace** if your friend would prefer to seek help online rather than face-to-face. **eheadspace.org.au** provides free online and telephone support (1800 650 890) for young people. Lifeline (13 11 14) and Kids Helpline (1800 55 1800) also provide free and confidential support over the phone.



If your friend is not okay...



If your friend doesn't want to get help and you are still worried

Continue to support them in a respectful way. Try not to judge them or become frustrated.

Let their family or another trusted adult know that you are worried. You have to strike the right balance between your friend's right to privacy and the need to make sure they are safe. If you decide to tell someone else, try to let your friend know first that you are planning on doing this.

What not to do or say

Don't tell them to cheer up or get over it – this is not helpful.

Don't encourage them to have a night out involving drugs or alcohol. Substance use may help them cope with their concerns temporarily, but is likely to make things worse.

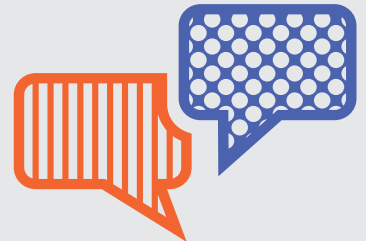
Don't make promises you can't keep – if your friend is at risk of harming themselves or somebody else, you need to seek immediate help, even if they ask you not to.



If you are worried that your friend needs urgent medical help or might hurt themselves or somebody else, you need to tell somebody immediately, even if they have asked you not to. This could be a parent, teacher, their GP, someone from a local health service or by calling 000.

Some things you can say or ask to encourage someone to seek further help

- **Have you talked to anyone else about this?** It's great that you have talked to me, but it might be good to get advice and help from a health worker.
- **Getting help doesn't always mean sitting on a couch with a psychologist or taking medication.** Did you know that GPs can help with this sort of stuff? Find one that bulk bills then all you need is your Medicare card (i.e. you don't have to pay)
- **There are some great websites you can check out to get more information:** headspace.org.au; reachout.com.au; youthbeyondblue.com
- **Did you know that you can get free and confidential support online or over the phone?** You can log on to ehheadspace.org.au to get online and telephone support from a mental health professional. You can also call Kids Helpline or Lifeline to speak to someone. All of these services are anonymous.
- **I know you're not feeling great now, but with the right help and support, you can get through this.**



Supporting a friend through a tough time can be difficult. Remember to look after yourself and your needs. Following the 'Tips for a healthy **headspace**' fact sheet may be a good way to look after your own wellbeing to prevent any problems developing. If at any stage you feel overwhelmed you should consider getting some support from a trusted adult (e.g. parent, teacher or GP). You can also contact **headspace** or Kids Helpline.



headspace
National Youth Mental Health Foundation

For more information, to find your nearest headspace centre or for online and telephone support, visit headspace.org.au

WHAT TO DO, WHERE TO GO, HOW TO SURVIVE

[Anxious, Worried or Need to Talk](#)

ACTION ON DEPRESSION run a number of support services including a phone and email helpline, self-help support groups and “Living Life to the Full” courses
www.actionondepression.org – Tel: 0131 226 8152

Breathing Space free, confidential phone-line to call when feeling down or stressed
www.breathingspacescotland.co.uk - Tel: 0800 83 85 87

ChildLine is the UK's free, 24-hour helpline for children in distress or danger
<http://www.childline.org.uk> - Tel: 0800 11 11

PAPYRUS is a voluntary UK organisation committed to the prevention of young suicide and the promotion of mental

HOPELineUK

health and emotional wellbeing. **0800 068 41 41** for practical advice on suicide prevention.
<http://papyrus-uk.org>

Samaritans confidential non-judgemental emotional support, 24 hours a day for people who are experiencing feelings of distress or despair, including those which could lead to suicide.
<http://www.samaritans.org/> - Tel: 116 123

SAMH is the Scottish Association for Mental Health
www.samh.org.uk – Tel: 0141 530 1000

YOUNGMINDS simple, clear advice on mental health problems aimed at 8-16 year olds.
www.youngminds.org.uk – Tel: 020 7089 5050 Parents Helpline – 0808 802 5544

Mikeysline Text helpline run by young volunteers. Mood app available.
www.mikeysline.co.uk – Text Helpline: 07779 303 303 (7pm Friday – 7am Monday)

[Bereavement](#)

Cruse Bereavement Care Scotland <http://www.crusescotland.org.uk/> - National Helpline 0845 600 2227

Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide exists to meet the needs and break the isolation of those bereaved by the suicide of a close relative or friend.
<http://www.uk-sobs.org.uk/> - National Helpline – 0300 111 5065 (9am to 9pm every day)

Touched by Suicide runs local support groups for those bereaved by suicide.
Tel: 01294 274273

Winstons Wish Practical support for bereaved children, young people & their families.
www.winstonswish.org.uk - Helpline – 08088 020 021

[Bullying : General](#)

Kidscape information on bullying with special section on their website for young people.
<http://www.kidscape.org.uk>

Respect Me Scottish anti-bullying service. Information about your rights and real-life stories from young people who have been bullied.
<http://www.respectme.org.uk/>

Anti-Bullying Established by the Scottish Executive for parents, teachers and young people.
www.antibullying.net

Bullying : Cyberbullying

Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre dedicated to eradicating the sexual abuse of children and to making the internet a safer place <http://www.ceop.gov.uk/> **Click CEOP** the best way to report abuse on **Facebook**: see <http://apps.facebook.com/clickceop/>

Digizens advice and resources on social networking and cyberbullying
<http://www.digizen.org/>

Kidscape Information for children & young people, parents & carers on all aspects of cyber bullying.
www.kidscape.org.uk/cyberbullying

Bullying : Text Bullying

TxtUpStandUP Tips from young people about how to beat text bullies
<http://www.txtup.co.uk/>

Carers

North Ayrshire Young Carers Work with young people aged 8 – 18 whose lives are negatively affected by the illness or disability of a family member.
www.north-ayrshire.gov.uk/resident/health-and-social-care/carers - **Tel 01294 311 333**

Debt & Benefits Advice

Citizens Advice Direct Free, confidential Scottish telephone advice. Need advice outwith 9am-5pm? Advice Line open till 8pm weekdays and 10am-2pm Saturday.
<http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/> - **Tel: 0808 800 9060**

National Debt Line for people with debt problems, Monday - Friday 9am-9pm and Saturday 9.30am - 1pm
<http://www.nationaldebtline.org> - **Tel: 0808 808 4000**

Welfare Rights and Debt run by North Ayrshire Council
Advice Helpline contactus@north-ayrshire.gov.uk - **Tel: 01294-317 786**
North Ayrshire Citizens Advice Service
<http://www.nacasadvice.org.uk>

Arran CAB	Tel: 01770 302 710
Irvine CAB	Tel: 01294 278 051
Kilbirnie CAB	Tel: 01294 467 848
Largs CAB	Tel: 01294 467 848

Drugs & Alcohol

Know the Score confidential helpline
<http://knowthescore.info/> - Tel: 0800 587 5879

Scottish Families Affected by Alcohol & Drugs national helpline open 7 days a week, 5pm-11pm.
<http://sfad.org.uk/> - Tel: 08080 10 10 11 Free help line

Scottish Drugs Service Directory
<http://www.scottishdrugservices.com/sdd/homepage.htm> - Tel: 0141 221 1175

Headmeds Gives young people in UK general information about medication.
www.headmeds.org.uk

My Family and Alcohol for any family member who is worried about alcohol in their lives.
www.myfamilyandalcohol.org.uk

Drink Aware an independent charity working to reduce alcohol misuse and harm in the UK.
www.drinkaware.co.uk

crew2000 for information on drugs.
www.crew2000.org.uk – 0131 220 3404

Housing

Community Housing Advocacy Project (CHAP) free, confidential, independent advice, information and advocacy support on housing issues to all residents across North Ayrshire. Youth website:
www.chap-at-the-door.org.uk -Tel: 01294 475 636

Shelter Scotland for advice on housing and homelessness call.
<http://scotland.shelter.org.uk/getadvice> - Tel: 0808 800 4444 Free help-line

Jobs & Careers

Careers Scotland for all your career advice needs
www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk - Tel: 0800 917 8000

Community Employment Service for help finding work and training opportunities
www.ceis.org.uk/employability - Tel: 01294 322 707

Job Centre Plus database for job vacancies, careers information, training and volunteering opportunities
<http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/YoungPeople/Workandcareers/index.htm>

Wise Group job search, personal development and help progressing towards employment
www.thewisegroup.co.uk -Tel: **0141 303 3131**

General

LGBT Youth Scotland is Scotland's largest youth and community-based lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) organisation.
www.lgbtyouth.org.uk – Tel: **0141 552 7425**

North Ayrshire Council A-Z of local services
www.north-ayrshire.gov.uk/a-z.aspx

Penumbra Supports adults and young people in Scotland to move towards mental wellbeing. Their services include Penumbra's North Ayrshire Self-Harm Project.
www.penumbra.org.uk – Tel: **01294 471 934**

Worth Talking About Helpline providing information, advice and guidance for young people aged 12 – 18 on sexuality & sexual health. Issues dealt with include contraception, pregnancy, family planning clinics, etc.
www.nhs.uk/worhtalkingabout

Young Scot Scottish Youth Information for 11 - 26 year olds – Mon to Fri 10 am to 6 pm
www.youngscot.org – Tel: **0808 801 0338**

CLASP (Community Led Action Support project) Community resource centre offering advice across North Ayrshire.
<http://www.clasps.org.uk> – Tel: **01294 602 711**



FARTING IN ASSEMBLY IS RISKY.

TALKING TO CHILDLINE ISN'T.



ChildLine
0800 1111

childline.org.uk

ASKING OUT THE FITTEST BOY IN SCHOOL IS SCARY.

TALKING TO CHILDLINE ISN'T.



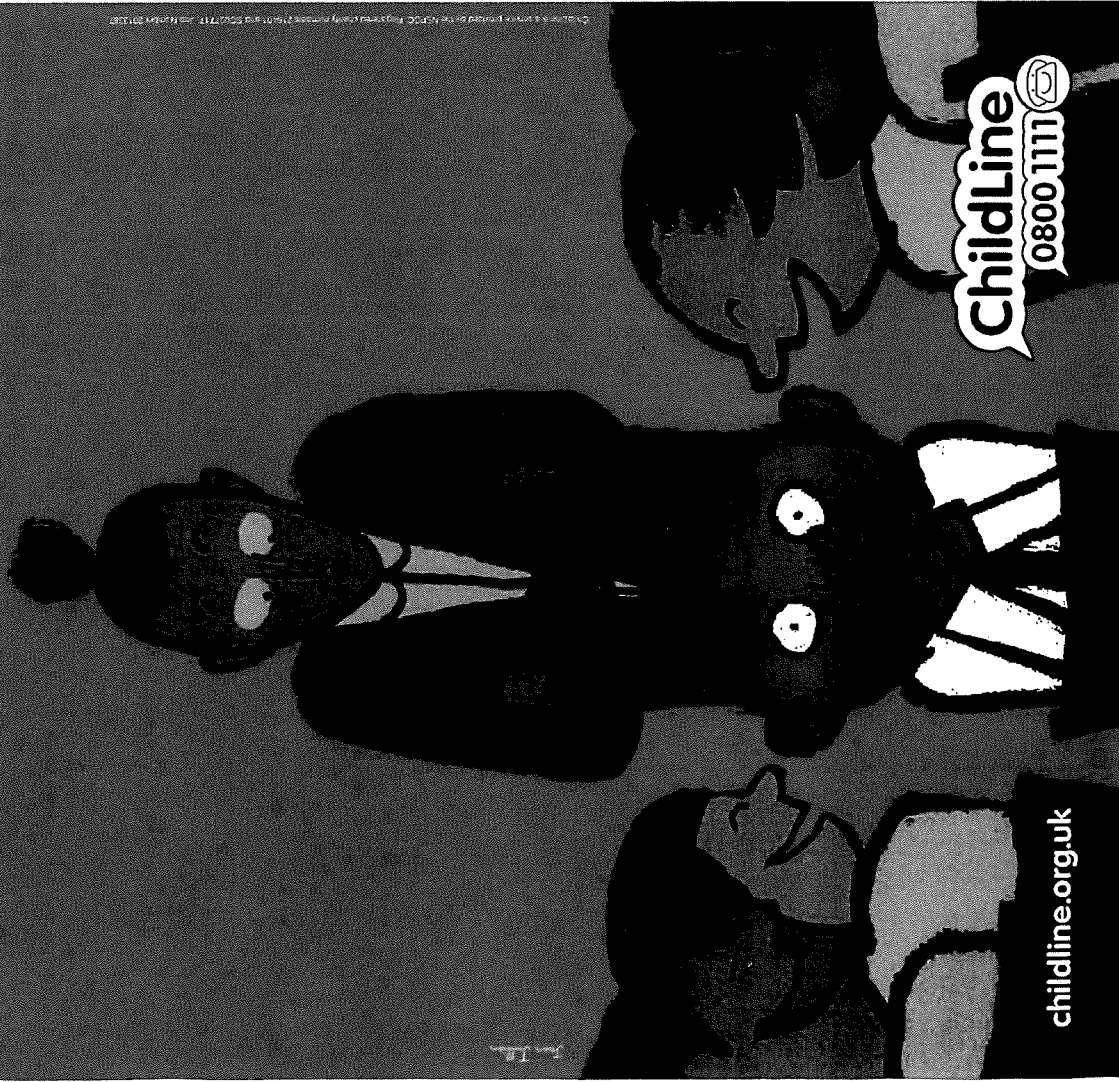
ChildLine
0800 1111

childline.org.uk

CHILDLINE IS A SERVICE PROVIDED BY THE NATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR CHILDREN'S PROBLEMS AND CONCERNS. FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT WWW.CHILDLINE.ORG.UK

**CALLING YOUR TEACHER
'MUM' IS EMBARRASSING.**

TALKING TO CHILDLINE ISN'T.



**TEXTING YOUR GRAN
INSTEAD OF YOUR GIRLFRIEND
IS EMBARRASSING.**

TALKING TO CHILDLINE ISN'T.



Course aims

This course does not train you to become a counsellor or mental health professional. It is designed to teach you to better understand mental health and how it affects young people, as well as to learn mental health first aid skills such as:

- how to recognise the signs of mental health problems or distress
- how to ask about mental distress
- how to provide initial support
- how to guide a person towards appropriate professional help.

The course also aims to show how mental health first aid can be applied in a crisis situation involving a range of common mental health problems, such as depression and anxiety, eating disorders, self-harm, suicide and substance misuse.

The course structure is flexible and is delivered through a blended learning approach – 7 hours of face-to-face training with self-study modules before and after. Participants will receive a certificate of completion and a copy of the SMHFA:YP manual.

It is essential when applying mental health first aid that people complete the full programme of discussions, activities and skills training in this 14-hour course. The contents of individual parts of the training course alone will not enable a participant to become a competent mental health first aider.

Contact details

SMHFA:YP instructors will be delivering courses across Scotland. For details of dates, times and venues in your area please visit the SMHFA website at www.smhfa.com/youngpeople or contact your local instructor:

**Educational Psychology Service
5th Floor Cunninghame House
Irvine, KA12 8EE
Tel: 01294 324500**

For general enquiries please contact the SMHFA:YP Administrator:

by email
nhs.healthscotland-smhfa@nhs.net

by phone
0131 536 5500

or visit
www.smhfa.com/youngpeople

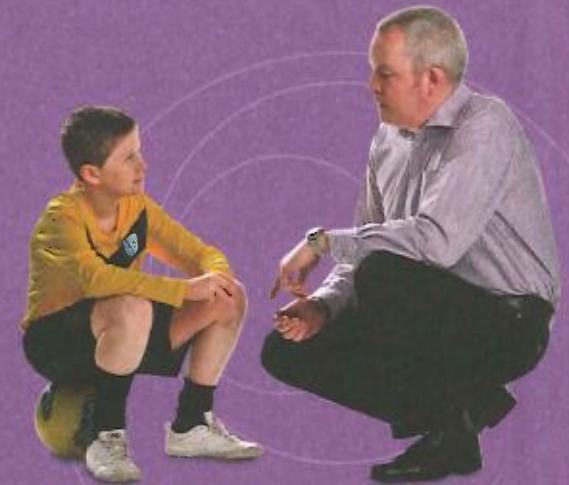
SMHFA:YP is funded by the Scottish Government as one part of Scotland's work on mental health improvement.

Scotland's
mental health
first aid



NHS
Health
Scotland

Scotland's mental health first aid: young people



An evidence-based learning
course for adults; to provide
initial support in a crisis and
non-crisis situation

Mental health first aid was developed in Australia and is based on the concept of general first aid training. It is an evidence-based course with the aim of improving the general public's awareness and understanding of mental health.

The Scotland's mental health first aid (SMHFA) programme was launched in Scotland in 2004 and has been successfully rolled out to in excess of 40,000 people so far. In 2012, the Scotland's mental health first aid: young people (SMHFA:YP) programme was developed to meet the increasing demand for a similar type of approach for adults who support or care for young people aged between 11 and 17 years old.

Why train in mental health first aid for young people?

There are many reasons why people who live or work with young people need training in mental health first aid. Participants will gain an increased knowledge and awareness of mental health issues, as well as improved confidence in:

- being able to detect problems early
- helping to reduce stigma around mental health issues
- helping young people to recognise problems
- providing guidance and immediate assistance to a young person in crisis.



'Relevant, necessary and tailored to the Scottish audience'

'It fills the gaps and has been needed for a long time'

Who should attend?

This course is particularly relevant for those who are likely to come into contact with young people at risk of mental health problems. This includes teachers, youth workers, sports/dance/drama coaches, social workers, parents and others assisting young people across a variety of settings.

SMHFA:YP instructors

The course can only be delivered by a specially selected, trained and approved person. This ensures that all SMHFA:YP instructors have a certain level of knowledge, skills and experience. It also ensures that there is consistency in delivery across Scotland and that the quality of the delivery of the course can be monitored.

Participants on the pilot course said:

'Really impressed with content and usability'

'Great for the home learning part as learners can learn at own pace'

'Lots of worthwhile information'



ADVICE ON HOW TO USE PENUMBRA'S SAFETY PLAN

This Safety Plan (which complements the Responding to Self-Harm in a Secondary School Setting) has been produced to assist secondary school staff in North Ayrshire when supporting a pupil who is at risk of self harm. . In recognition of the need to develop consistent practice and in keeping with the Ayrshire multi-agency guidance this tool can be shared Ayrshire wide.

The plan is intended to be completed by the pupil, assisted by a member of staff. Once completed the pupil should be provided with a copy to keep at home and encouraged to refer to it whenever he/she has thoughts of self-harm. We would recommend that you also retain a copy and keep it in the pupil's records for future reference. (It may also be useful to keep a copy in case the pupil loses their version of the form)

Advice on completing the Safety Plan:

Family/Friends phone numbers:

Although the pupil is likely to have these numbers stored in their phone the pupil should still write the numbers on the form. This ensures that if there is a problem with their phone they still have access to these numbers.

What has helped you in the past?

Ask pupil if there has been anything that has helped them previously to avoid self-harming.

Who could you speak to?

Who would they feel comfortable speaking to? Ask have they spoken to anyone in the past that has helped them.

If the pupil does not feel that they could speak to anyone that they know, then suggest that they consider phoning one of the crisis numbers (contact details are at top of the Safety Plan). Alternatively, they may prefer to contact these services online:

Childline have an online chat facility. www.childline.org.uk

The Samaritans also have a dedicated email address: jo@samaritans.org

What could you try?

Ask the pupil what they could do to take their mind of things. Consider providing them with list of distractions/alternatives to self harm. We would recommend the National Self Harm Network's distraction leaflet. Copies can be downloaded from their website: www.nshn.co.uk/upload/Distractions.pdf

Risks to avoid:

Ask the pupil if there are certain situations/events/triggers that make them more at risk of self harm (e.g. when drinking alcohol/using drugs or perhaps using social network sites). Advise pupil to avoid these risks.

People I can contact:

Organisations below provide support over the phone in times of crisis	Tel No:
Childline	0800 1111 Also provide online support: www.childline.org.uk
The Samaritans	116 123 Email: jo@samaritans.org www.samaritans.org
Breathing Space	0800 83 85 87 www.breathingspacescotland.org.uk

Family/Friends (who can support you)	
Name	Phone number

Things you can do to help

What has helped you in the past?

Who could you speak to?

What could you try?

Risks to avoid:

Useful Websites:

Young Scot: www.youngscot.org/info/453-how-can-i-help-someone-who-is-self-harming

Look OK Feel Crap: www.lookokfeelcrap.org/feeling-crap/self-harm

The Site.org: www.thesite.org/healthandwellbeing/mentalhealth/selfharm

TRAINING INFORMATION – SUICIDE PREVENTION – NORTH AYRSHIRE

Across Ayrshire – Multi-agency training

safeTALK - Suicide Awareness for Everyone

The course is designed to help participants:

- Recognise that a person might be having thoughts of suicide.
- Engage that person in direct and open talk about suicide.
- Move quickly to connect them with someone trained in suicide intervention.

The course lasts approximately 3 – 3 1/2 hours and is a mixture of lecture, video and power point presentation with opportunities to discuss issues and practice engaging and connecting skills.

A.S.I.S.T - Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (2 days)

The aim of the course is:

- To preserve life where a person may be a danger to themselves.
- Listen and talk to a person with suicidal intention without judgement.
- Provide comfort to a person with suicidal intention.

It is an intensive 2-day interactive and practice dominated course.

It is generally run over 2 full days.

S.T.O.R.M - Skills Based Training on Risk Management (2days)

This course is designed in 4 modules:

- Assessment
- Crisis Management
- Problem Solving
- Crisis Prevention

The aim of the course is:

- To help trainers gain and maintain the skills to assess a person at risk.
- To help trainees manage the crisis effectively.

For information and booking, contact NHS Team at 01292 513020.

North Ayrshire Training

In North Ayrshire the Choose Life Manager can provide training and awareness sessions directly to staff and other groups.

Either:

- a) **safeTALK** to groups of 10 – 30 people (see over the page for details)

or

- b) Be-spoke awareness raising of 1 to 2 hours.

Awareness raising can cover areas such as:

- a) **Myths** about suicide and suicidal behaviour
- b) **Statistics** and facts about suicide
- c) **The Impact** of and support after a death by suicide
- d) **How to raise** the issue with someone you are concerned about
- e) **How to listen** to someone who is troubled
- f) **How to keep** yourself safe

For information and discussion contact about what would suit your needs contact:

Sarah Watts, Choose Life Manager at 01505 684551 or
SWatts@north-ayrshire.gcsx.gov.uk.

SafeTALK in Schools - Ayrshire

Would you like to know more about the difficult and sensitive issue of suicide and what you can do to become more suicide alert?

safeTALK is a suicide alertness programme that teaches individuals to recognize someone with thoughts of suicide and to connect them to suicide intervention resources.

SafeTALK is

- a short program (3–3.5 hours)
- taught by one or two trainers with groups of **10 to 30 participants**
- for anyone who wishes to become more suicide alert
- for anyone age 15 and over

What is safeTALK?

SafeTALK prepares you to become suicide helpers and have the confidence to talk to someone with thoughts of suicide and help them keep safe

SafeTALK prepares you to be able to ask someone if they are having thoughts of suicide

SafeTALK explores why it is difficult to talk to someone and why we might miss, dismiss or avoid asking about suicide

SafeTALK is linked to and is an introduction for further 2 day training known as ASIST (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training)

Guidance for Schools

- **SafeTALK is not suitable for anyone who has recently been bereaved or affected by suicide**
- **If a school wishes to receive a SafeTALK training session for young people then it is essential that at least one member of staff is present (more if possible)**

- If there is an ASIST trained member of staff in the school – we recommend they attend the training
- The nature of the subject does sometime mean individuals can be affected-there will be someone within the room who can take them out and sit with them if required
- SafeTALK should be optional-it is for individuals who wish to be there.
- All recipients will receive a certificate
- The school should identify a named contact person to organise the training – to liaise on issues such as venue, equipment, preparation, room layout etc.
- The training cannot be delivered over 2 days
- The school should consider appropriate timing as this is an emotive and challenging topic. After school is often best to ensure commitment.

For more information about this training or any other information about suicide prevention please contact:

*Sarah Watts
Choose Life Manager
North Ayrshire Council*

*Tel 01505 685657
e-mail swatts@north-ayrshire.gcsx.gov.uk*

SUICIDE. DONT HIDE IT.TALK ABOUT IT

***BREATHING SPACE 0800 838587
SAMARITANS 116 123
CHILDLINE 0800 1111***

Twilight Session - 17/3/16 – Garnock Academy

SUICIDE AWARENESS

This session will introduce the difficult issue of suicide and suicide prevention. This topic is sensitive and emotive so requires us to talk about it in an open and honest way. We seek to support those in crisis as well as learn how we can raise the subject appropriately and carefully.

The aim will be to:

- Look at Myths, Facts and Evidence
- Explore how to talk about suicide and how to ask someone if they are thinking of suicide
- Explore important risk and protective factors for young people-to help you to keep them safe
- Consider what tools are available for supporting you to support young people
- Ensure staff know about further training and skills development

October Break Keeping Healthy and Well

Dear Parent/Guardian

Following a difficult few weeks at school all our students/pupils will be looking forward to their October break and we hope that everyone keeps well and healthy throughout.

Some young people may have questions about mental and emotional health issues so here are some places where you can find out some information for yourself and seek help and advice if necessary.

The 'see me' website www.seemescotland.org.uk has information as well as fact sheets.

Also www.youngminds.org.uk has information and advice about young people and emotional wellbeing- for parents and for young people themselves. www.samh.org.uk provides a range of information on mental health issues

For Information and Support

- ChildLine

0800 11 11

www.childline.org.uk provides confidential advice and support to children and young people using their free telephone service. The organisation also publishes factsheets online through their comprehensive website.

- Breathing Space

0800 83 85 87

www.breathingspacescotland.org provides a free confidential listening service, offering advice, guidance and support. Advisors can also provide a signposting service to other agencies. Available Mon-Thurs 6pm to 2am and Fri-Mon 6pm to 6am.

- Samaritans

116 123

www.samaritans.org.uk provides a 24 hour listening service to people in crisis or despair. You can also contact them anonymously by email: jo@samaritans.org

- Parentline

0808 028 22 33

www.children1st.org.uk/services/46/parentline-scotland provides a confidential helpline to give parents an opportunity to 'offload' and be pointed in the right direction for information and support.

- Papyrus

Hopeline 08000 68 41 41

www.papyrus-uk.org provides information and support about prevention of young suicide

Finally:

After the October Break a parents evening is being arranged for parents of senior pupils where we hope to give parents useful and helpful information regarding emotional health issues- especially as we approach the exam period. Further information will be provided once a date has been confirmed.

DRAFT

TALKING TO YOUNG PEOPLE

Sometimes it can be difficult or hard to talk to young people, especially when they can't communicate to you how they are feeling or they can't understand their feelings.

Here are some points to help:

TAKE THEM SERIOUSLY if they wish to talk about how they are feeling. It can take courage to ask for help or admit to having a problem.

LISTEN to what they are saying and give them your attention. Try not to criticise or be judgemental.

BE PATIENT and remember things rarely get sorted overnight. Keep supporting and caring for them.

REASSURE them that difficult feelings can be overcome and that they are not alone.

REMEMBER that good emotional and mental health are essential for children and teenagers to cope with and enjoy life.

If you are worried about your child's problems or need advice and information about how to cope, there are some numbers and websites which may help:

YoungMinds Parent Helpline
Tel: 0808 802 5544
email: parents@youngminds.org.uk

Parentline Scotland
Tel: 0800 028 2233
email: parentlinescotland@children1st.org.uk



A young man with short dark hair, wearing a dark camouflage-patterned hoodie, is looking down with a somber expression. To his left, the back of a woman's head and her hand resting on his shoulder are visible, suggesting a moment of support or concern. The background is a warm, yellowish-orange glow, possibly from indoor lighting.

YOUNG MiNDS

Young Minds Matter

**Your guide to caring for the
mental wellbeing of a child**

“I feel the age bracket from 16–25 is very under supported in many communities, and yet there are some of the strongest societal pressures and expectations laid upon this age group.”

- Charlotte



Mental health in children and young people

Children and young people's minds are developing at a rapid rate.

And as they grow up, all the challenges they face can affect their behaviour, emotions and their view on the world.

In today's complex society, those challenges can lead to difficulties which have a big impact as children get older.

In this leaflet you'll find information on children and young people's mental health, what can affect it and where to go if you need help with your child.

Why worry about mental health?

Good mental health is an important part of living a happy and fulfilled life – whether you're 93, 33 or 3 years old

It's easy to think children don't suffer the same way adults do – after all, they don't have the same pressures such as money worries or relationship issues which can bring adults down.

But growing up is difficult. Whether it's making friends at school, seeing their bodies change as they mature or coping with family problems, these challenges can sometimes feel overwhelming and can lead to mental health difficulties that can continue to affect a young person in later life.

The importance of good mental health

Research has shown that children and young people with good mental health:

- Do better at school
- Develop good relationships with friends and family
- Learn and play appropriately for their age and understanding
- Develop a sense of right and wrong
- Learn from their experiences
- Have the confidence to try new things

So a child with good mental health when they're young is much more likely to have good mental health as an adult.

80,000

Nearly 80,000 children and young people suffer from clinical depression in the UK.

3 children

in every classroom in the UK have a diagnosable mental health condition

You can help

Every child needs three key things:

- Love
- Security
- Understanding

And it's the adults in their life who provide them.

That includes parents and carers, as well as relatives, teachers and family friends.

So your support is essential in making sure that the environment your child grows up in, is best able to help them grow up with a healthy mind.

“It is often difficult to identify a child or young person in difficulty as they can find it hard to explain their feelings – even to themselves. It is often through their behaviour that they send us the signals that they are feeling troubled.”



What can affect a child's mental health?

There are a whole host of things in life that can make growing up hard, including:

- Family relationships
- Friends
- School pressures
- Technology
- The media

Most children cope well, especially when they grow up in a supportive environment. In some cases, children can have a genetic predisposition towards a mental illness or psychological issue. But there are also things that happen around them that can trigger difficulties, such as:

- Divorce, separation or bereavement
- Physical and mental illness or disability in the family
- Parents with alcohol or drug problems
- Financial or housing problems
- Bullying
- Learning difficulties

Supporting your child and getting help early

If you think your child might have a mental health problem, your support is essential. Support could be:

- Talking openly and honestly with them about mental health
- Listening and acknowledging how they're feeling
- Encouraging and reassuring them
- Trying to work out what the best way forward is together
- Keeping yourself well supported too

Spotting a problem early, providing support and asking for help if you need it can prevent your child from developing certain problems or difficulties such as:

- Becoming very withdrawn or sad
- Anxiety

- Panic attacks and phobias
- Obsessive or addictive behaviour
- Sleep problems
- Eating problems
- Problems focusing or concentrating
- Aggressive or disruptive behaviour
- Self-harming
- Wetting or soiling
- Refusing to go to school or difficult behaviour in school
- Problems with friendships or bullying
- Risk-taking behaviour
- Drug or alcohol use



What help is available?

If your child's problems continue to the point where they're very distressed, confused or out of control and you feel you need professional help to manage it, there is support available.

The first person to contact is either your GP, social worker, a teacher at your child's school or a health visitor. They'll be able to put you in touch with the most appropriate service to help you. Those services include:

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)

Specialist NHS services run by trained professionals such as psychiatrists, psychologists, psychotherapists, family therapists, social workers, doctors, nurses, counsellors and occupational therapists. You'll normally be referred to CAMHS by your GP if your child is under 16 years old and approaches CAMHS themselves, you'll normally be contacted if any further help is needed. Most CAMHS services will accept referrals from school nurses and social workers too.

Youth counselling centres – these groups specialise in counselling young people and hold sessions in schools, youth clubs and specialist advice centres. Children under 16 can refer themselves to these services, although a referral is usually provided by a GP or your child's school.

Specialist helplines and websites – there are a number of different organisations which run helplines, forums and online chat services where young people can go to talk about what's worrying them (search online youth counselling services)

YoungMinds Parents Helpline - a free, confidential service for parents where you can talk through any problems your child is facing and where our expert advisors can provide information about support and services in your area. You can contact us Mon to Fri from 9:30am to 4pm on 0808 802 5544.

You'll find contact details for all these helplines and organisations at the back of this booklet.

Useful contacts

youngminds.org.uk

Our free, confidential Parents' Helpline offers information and advice to any adult worried about the emotional problems, behaviour or mental health of a child or young person up to the age of 25.

Helpline: 0808 802 5544

Email: parents@youngminds.org.uk

Mon-Fri 9:30am - 4pm



relate.org.uk

Relate - the relationship people. Help with all aspects of family life

Telephone: 0300 100 1234

themix.org.uk

The Mix give free information and support for under 25s in the UK. They provide advice about sex, relationships, drugs, mental health, money & jobs.

Telephone: 0808 808 4994

Royal College of Psychiatrists

Provides a range of leaflets and factsheets about children and young people's mental health.

Website: www.rcpsych.ac.uk



YoungMinds
Suite 11 Baden Place
Crosby Row
London SE1 1YW
Telephone 020 7089 5050

yomenquiries@youngminds.org.uk

youngminds.org.uk



LOTTERY FUNDED

Registered charity number: 1016968

Company limited by guarantee number: 02780643

Thank you to Dr Andrea Gnanadurai and her colleagues at the Child and Family Public Engagement Board, Royal College of Psychiatry for fact checking this booklet.

KEY RESOURCE- Samaritans- Step by Step

stepbystep@samaritans.org Tel: 0808 168 2528

Checklist for Death by Suicide

School are informed of the death - *contact Step by Step Samaritans at this stage*



A 'crisis team' meets to review facts and agree roles for the following activities:

- Announcement to students
- Inform senior management
- Letter to parents
- Staff meeting arrangements
- Allocate room for support
- Media liaison
- Alert other schools / agencies that may be affected



Staff meeting to give staff time to cope before informing pupils as well as to ensure they understand the above arrangements. Non-teaching staff will also need to be informed.



Contact the victim's family – personally – by a known staff member. Ask for their wishes for school involvement in any arrangements e.g. funeral, and make resources available as required.



Inform pupils in smaller groups (not assembly)
Close friends and peers first if possible
Others informed in year groups or at registration classes etc.
Allow time out in support room, have written material available (support leaflets etc.)
Allow very distressed pupils to go home if there are responsible adults at home to support them and this is deemed appropriate.



The Head **may** wish to send a letter to all parents about the death and what support is available and possible grief responses their children may experience etc.



Continue to meet as staff or crisis team when necessary – this may be daily in the early stages.



Monitor 'vulnerable' young people and staff
Make material readily available – support leaflets etc.
Consider what parents / families may need e.g. written information or one-to-one meetings or wider parents meeting.

FINALLY

The kind of relevant information which should be known by all staff:

- Funeral arrangements
- Support resources available (organisations, staff & written)
- To be alert to vulnerable young people
- How to handle gifts, memorials
- Agreed announcement to pupils – wording, facts and level of detail
- Who is the media spokesperson?

This should be seen as a guide only as each circumstance will be different and each school community will be different.

DRAFT

Specific Issues of Concern for a Death by Suicide

The process outlined above is a useful organising tool for dealing with the aftermath of a death by suicide (sometimes called postvention). There are, however, some specific issues which may be of particular concern when suicide is the 'critical incident'. All deaths should be acknowledged and those affected allowed to mourn and grieve. Death by suicide may require careful support and management but should not be ignored as this will only add to the sense of stigma and create rumour.

Stigma

A large amount of sensitivity will be needed to deal with taboos, myths and stigma associated with suicide. It is really important to be honest, accurate and dispel myths as they are raised.

Blame

The nature of suicide makes it difficult for communities to make sense of and frequently individuals seek to apportion blame. This is often exacerbated by social media communications. No-one is to blame. Suicide is a result of complex and multi-layered feelings and emotions.

Those previously affected by suicide

When a suicide occurs within a community, anyone who has been affected by a suicide in the past, however long ago, will almost always find their experiences coming back to them. As many of these individuals will have kept their experience hidden they may find it difficult to come forward or seek support.

Copycat deaths/contagion

A particular concern following death by suicide (especially of a young person) is the increased risk of other vulnerable individuals to act on their thoughts of suicide. It is not possible to put the idea of suicide into someone's head if it's not there. But this is a time of vulnerability for those who have thoughts of suicide or are considering it. There are guidelines for appropriate media reporting which can minimise this possibility and honest, sensitive discussion will enable those feeling vulnerable to feel confident to disclose their feelings.

Shrines

Linked to the above is the tendency for the place of death (if it is outdoors) to become a shrine with tributes and gifts left and where young people gather together. A careful and sensitive balance needs to be struck between recognising the need to mourn, grieve and remember without 'glamorising' or 'sensationalising' the death.

School Environment

There will be reminders around the school of the young person who has died e.g. artwork. These should be dealt with in the same way as any other death of a young person. Generally it is best to wait until a natural end of term break.

KEY RESOURCE – Samaritans – Step by Step

stepbystep@samaritans.org **Tel: 0808 168 2528**

Checklist and support information

1. The Head Teacher is key. Meet regularly with those who can help with decision making and have the expertise to guide and support- **Find out who they are.**
2. Find a colleague or “buddy” (from outwith the school)- this may be your senior manager or it may be another head teacher but someone who can help you with the general decision making about other issues. These tragic events may affect how quickly/efficiently you can make decisions which are normally straightforward. **Find a buddy.**
3. Make links with primary schools especially if there are affected siblings –keep in touch-share and support. **Contact primary school/siblings school**
4. Use of social media can be useful but also a real danger. Make sure you know from communications team what messages can be sent and how much can be said. Use the school systems if appropriate but remind pupils and parents that gossip and rumour distress the family. **Check who the contact is re media and communications**

Pupils-some specific issues:

- Pupils and friends concerns about each other are heightened-be prepared for pupils to become very anxious if friends text or leave ambiguous messages or go missing in school time etc. **Have a plan to re-assure, support and search if necessary**
- Sometimes senior pupils are a good resource to be a listening ear, look out for pupils and be the catalyst for concerns coming to staff attention. Ensure these pupils are mature and able to take on this role and are supported regularly –meeting, coffee, de-brief time **Support and meet senior pupils**
- Discrete posters with support numbers and contacts can be put in school toilets/washrooms/changing rooms for a time. Reaching pupils who we don’t know may be vulnerable **Place supportive literature around the school**

Classroom routines where the absence will be highlighted-this can be very distressing so the better prepared and efficient-then the better the response and support for everyone

- Coming across **jotters and work** belonging to the pupil
- Being aware of the **empty desk/chair** in a classroom
- Name on the class **registers**
- **Photos and pictures** around the school
- **Project/group work** with other pupils/friends
- **Clubs/extra curricular** activities
- **Lockers** and sports equipment/gear in changing rooms etc

- Maybe it's appropriate for one staff member to address this as much as possible in the immediate aftermath and link to class teachers to support them with future changes.

i.e. removing register name, reminding subject staff to be mindful of jotters and any group projects, leave photos in place until a natural school break or when you might ordinarily change things, liaise with clubs/after school staff. Empty desks- after a couple of weeks or at a natural break (long weekend or half term or holiday) re-arrange the chairs/desks into groups from rows or vice versa- talk to close friends and make the changes sensitively

Office staff (and other non-teaching staff) who will be in the frontline re phones, calls and visits

- Agree with them key words and phrases they should use –link to communications information
- Make sure they know who is the person dealing with media enquiries
- Make sure they are involved in any de-brief or support and follow up

Parents will be desperate for information

- An initial letter may be sent e.g. Step by Step **Know where to find sample letters/info**
- Any general school newsletters can have info and websites, helplines etc **find out what websites/info is available**
- If there is a natural break for holiday when pupils will not have their natural school supports- a letter with useful info might be helpful-

Staff

- The initial impact is very powerful for staff- be prepared for this-it is overwhelming
- Provide and encourage Occupational Health Referral for support and counselling
- An initial staff meeting is essential to share information about what has happened and agree roles and actions for staff
- Staff meetings and get together in the first days and weeks are helpful because of the shared experience-although not necessarily to talk about the death/bereavement
- Teaching is difficult-so allow flexibility and space but continue class times as best you can –it helps the pupils keep a structure and focus.
- It may be helpful to use external (non-Educational) support for pastoral (and other?) staff-and meet away from the school in groups-check to know where and with who this might occur
- Staff will need de-briefing opportunities-think about how and when to offer these



HELP WHEN WE NEEDED IT MOST

How to prepare for and respond
to a suspected suicide in schools
and colleges

SAMARITANS

This guidance forms part of Samaritans' Step by Step service to schools, which offers specially trained volunteers who can assist school leadership teams with their suicide response. Step by Step has a dedicated email and phone number. We will respond to you within 24 hours.

To request support:

 stepbystep@samaritans.org



Freephone* 0808 168 2528

*Calls are free from landlines and some mobile providers.

Further information:

 [samaritans.org/stepbystep](https://www.samaritans.org/stepbystep)

Nobody likes to think about a death in school. Yet suicide is a leading cause of death for young people in the UK and ROI. Sadly it is always a possibility that a student, parent or member of staff might take their own life.

However upsetting this must be, schools and other educational institutions play an important role in reducing the likelihood of copycat behaviour and helping recovery by preparing and responding to the situation appropriately.

This booklet is intended for those that have been affected by a suspected suicide or would like to be prepared and plan a response that helps rebuild the wellbeing of the community and reduces the risk of further suicides. We based this guidance on research and best practice concerning suicide response within school communities from across the world.

Every situation is different and Samaritans has been learning from the communities we have supported so that we can share our learning with others. We have specialist knowledge and skills. In the event of a suspected suicide, we can offer support, advice, guidance and local contacts all based on 60 years' experience working towards our vision that fewer people die by suicide.

Our Step by Step service aims to:

- Reach out to high risk people and communities to reduce the risk of further suicide;
- Support a school community to prepare for, respond to and recover from an attempted or suspected suicide;
- Provide information and support to help the school community come to terms with what has happened and prevent stigma and isolation in the school community.

SAMARITANS
STEP BY STEP

“I cannot thank Samaritans enough and the Step by Step team, the service is utterly brilliant and they deal with one of the most devastating things that can happen to a school.”

(Head teacher)

All quotes are from the 2013 evaluation of Samaritans' Step by Step service, carried out by Sherbert Research.

CONTENTS

What is Step by Step?	6
Creating a response plan	7
Breaking the news	8
Handling the media	9
Contacting the school community	10
Identifying and supporting vulnerable students	11
Starting difficult conversations	12
Memorials	14
Funerals	14
Responding to suspected suicide	15
Responding to attempted suicide	16
Further information about Samaritans	17
Other sources of support	18

For support and further information:

 stepbystep@samaritans.org



Freephone* 0808 168 2528

*Calls are free from landlines and some mobile providers.

What is Step by Step?

Samaritans has offered the Step by Step service to schools and colleges in the UK since 2010. Samaritans have a team of trained volunteers, called Postvention Advisors who are available to offer practical support and advice to schools, colleges and other youth settings that have been affected by a suspected suicide or attempted suicide.

Samaritans offers this service in order to support the school community, and reduce the risk of further suicide. Recent research on 'copycat' suicides and suicide 'contagion' suggest that, in young people especially, exposure to suicide can lead to increased risk of suicidal thoughts. A Canadian study found that the suicide of a schoolmate increased the risk of suicidal thoughts or attempts among young people aged 12-17 years (especially 12-13 year olds) for up to two years following the suicide, and had an impact that was even greater than the suicide of a family member.

Our service is designed to lessen the risk of further suicide by assisting school communities to handle the situation sensitively and responsibly, while returning to normal routines as quickly as possible. This guidance booklet forms part of Samaritans' Step by Step service to schools.

Postvention Advisors, with the support of local branch volunteers support includes: communications and talks to staff, parents and students, handling the media, responding to social media, support with memorials and anniversaries. As described in a recent evaluation of our service, 'Step by Step is there to reassure [senior leadership teams] that what they are doing is right for the school and advise them on what they feel works best throughout the incredibly difficult first few weeks.'

Your local authority and other organisations listed at the end of this guidance may also be able to provide emotional support and advice on specific issues.

Samaritans is available round the clock, every day of the year by phone, email, text, letter or face-to-face visits in the branch for anyone who might be struggling to cope. We have provided contact details for support services at the end of this booklet.

We can also assist with raising awareness of emotional health among young people, by offering talks in schools, colleges and youth groups (contact schools@samaritans.org). Contact our Step by Step service via email stepbystep@samaritans.org or **Freephone* 0808 168 2528** and we will do all we can to help you deal with a situation you may never have faced before.

“We made decisions in that first week that I don't think we would have made if we had been supported by Step by Step early on.”

(Head teacher)

“Samaritans gave us the confidence to do things the right way.”

(Head teacher)

*Calls are free from landlines and some mobile providers.

1 Swanson, S. A., & Colman, I. (2013). Association between exposure to suicide and suicidality outcomes in youth. CMAJ: Canadian Medical Association Journal = Journal De L'Association Medicale Canadienne. Date of Electronic Publication: 27 May 2013.

2 Sherbert Research (2013). Full report: Step by Step Evaluation.

Creating a response plan

Although a school can be affected by many challenging incidents, including sickness and accidental death, it is suicide that presents the unique risk of potentially being the trigger for another suicide.

The key to coping with a crisis is to plan. It is particularly important that the school responds to a suspected suicide within 48 hours. This is necessary to maintain the structure and order of the school routine, while facilitating the expression of grief, and reducing the risk of imitative behaviour.

Schools with crisis plans in place are best equipped to deal with a suspected suicide when it happens. Good planning for the aftermath of a suspected suicide makes it easier for people to respond effectively at a time when resilience may be low.

A postvention¹ protocol is an agreed approach to responding to a suspected suicide. In a school setting, this protocol should ideally:

- be a written protocol, developed in advance of a suspected suicide;
- include working with the local community;
- involve the formation and training of a postvention team – be clear about who will do what;
- include procedures for notifying staff, parents and young people about a suspected suicide;
- include guidelines on how to inform the school community and handle the media;
- identify appropriate postvention services and facilities;
- include procedures for recognising ‘at risk’ individuals (including staff) and identifying where people would be referred;
- include an evaluation of the effectiveness of the postvention and any follow-up protocol.

It is good practice that the whole school community would be aware of essential information included in such planning, including who to tell, what to say and what not to say, and who is vulnerable.

“ They helped to point out pathways, when you couldn’t see the wood for the trees.”

(Teacher)

1 Postvention “is the term given to activities and programmes that are intended to assist those who have been bereaved by suicide to cope with what has happened. Suicide prevention and postvention are closely related in that postvention can also prevent further deaths.” (p.3, New Zealand Ministry of Youth Development, ‘Guidance for community organisations involved in suicide postvention’, 2005)

Breaking the news

Samaritans' Step by Step service can work with you to consider the ways in which a school may become aware of a suspected suicide, and how to respond to these to prevent rumour and misinformation and to consider the best actions to take in such cases.

- Establish the facts before acting on news of a suspected suicide. Contact the police or the family as soon as you can to confirm the death and whether or not it is being treated as suicide. Be aware that it is likely to be many months before an inquest (or fatal accident inquiry in Scotland) is held, and that in many cases narrative verdicts may mean that the death is not officially recorded as suicide. It is important to note that there may be a great deal of speculation within the school community, and that schools often have to act on the basis that the death is being treated as a suspected suicide.
- Notify the school (or local authority) incident management team. It is important to act quickly, while at the same time preparing the school leadership team and administration for continuous enquiries once the death is made known.
- Breaking the news to young people can be extremely difficult. Tell staff first and give them time to take in the news before addressing students. Make sure that staff know where and to whom they can turn for emotional support.
- Best practice suggests that, where possible, it is better to break the news to students in small groups or classes.
- When breaking the news it is important to be factual but to avoid excessive detail about the suicidal act itself. Rumours may be circulating and people may ask directly but try not to disclose details about the method used, whether there was a suicide note, or its contents.
- Consider preparing a statement for staff to use to ensure consistency across the school.
- Consider providing immediate counselling or emotional support to students and staff at the school. This may be arranged by the local authority.
- Try to strike a balance between sensitivity to those who are grieving and in shock, on the one hand, and the need to maintain the school routine, on the other. It may be helpful to set aside a room where students can go if they are upset.

“They dealt with our shock and eased our pain.”

(Head teacher)

“They anticipated what we needed as we were caught up in the hysteria of what had happened.”

(Head teacher)

Handling the media

Dealing with the media can add to what is an already stressful situation.

We advise you to appoint a single media spokesperson for the school and discourage other students and staff from making public comments.

The media spokesperson should prepare a statement for the media, and not deviate from it. Avoid giving details of the suicide method or any suicide note, or giving simple 'explanations' of the suicide such as '*...was stressed about exam results*'.

Use phrases like:

A suicide

Die by suicide

Take one's own life

A suicide attempt

A completed suicide

Person at risk of suicide

Help prevent suicide

Avoid phrases like:

A successful suicide attempt


An unsuccessful/failed suicide attempt

Commit suicide

Suicide victim

Just a cry for help

Suicide-prone person

Samaritans has published guidelines for the media, to ensure that reporting of suicide is sensitive and responsible. Samaritans' media team can help support you and the family in handling the media during a crisis situation.  [samaritans.org/media-centre](https://www.samaritans.org/media-centre)

Contact the press team (including out of hours) on: **+44 (0)7943 809 162.**

Contacting the school community

If a suspected suicide has affected the school community you will need to consider how to inform them. The Samaritans Step by Step service can advise and assist with this.

Parents/carers and all staff need to know:

- In brief what has happened (see 'Breaking the news' on page 8).
- What support the school is putting in place.
- What actions the school will take with regards to funerals and memorials.
- Where to find further information about suicide and grief.
- Where to access support for themselves.
- What to do if they are worried about someone else.

Communicating sensitively and appropriately about suicide

Information provided to the school community in the immediate aftermath of a suspected suicide should include and reinforce:

- facts (not rumours);
- an understanding that death is permanent;
- an exploration of normal and wide-ranging reactions to suicide (expressions of anger and guilt are entirely normal);
- an understanding that, with support, people can cope;
- an understanding that fleeting thoughts of suicide are not unusual;
- an awareness of suicidal warning signs and resources available to help;
- an understanding of funeral expectations.

When discussing any suspected suicide that has occurred, it is strongly recommended that the information given:

- is factually correct but does not include detail of the cause of death or method used;
- does not romanticise, glorify or vilify the death;
- does not include details of any suicide note;
- does not include speculation over the motive for suicide.

“When parents asked things that were, on the face of it, nonsensical, Samaritans answered them very calmly and never made parents feel they were asking stupid questions.”

(Head teacher)

Identifying and supporting vulnerable students

Those affected by suicide are themselves at increased risk of serious upset and may potentially be at greater risk of taking their own life. School staff should be asked to identify any young people who are vulnerable, and efforts should be made to provide additional support or referral to specialist services.

Suicide is a complex issue, usually with no single cause, and it is therefore not possible to generalise. However, there is some evidence to suggest that people who have previously experienced bereavement or undergone a personal crisis, people with mental health problems, and people in marginal groups may be more vulnerable. Teachers who know the students best should be alert to any students who are excessively upset or disturbed by the death. These young people should be offered appropriate support without delay.


“I asked them the most bizarre questions because the kids had asked me bizarre things and they responded so well. I was really impressed with the way they spoke to us.”

(Teacher)

“One thing that we did that made a big difference was a card to take home, which had the school mobile phone number on it. If they wanted to talk to someone they knew, they could, which was a really great idea and we received a few calls as half term was three weeks after the suicide.”

(Teacher)

How can Step by Step help?

The Step by Step service offers information leaflets for staff, parents and students on how to cope with a suspected suicide. This information is also available on our website  [samaritans.org/stepbystep](https://www.samaritans.org/stepbystep)

If you would like to discuss any concerns you have about supporting vulnerable students, call the Step by Step team today 0808 168 2528* or email stepbystep@samaritans.org

*Calls are free from landlines and some mobile providers.

Starting difficult conversations

If you're worried about a young person, try to get them to talk to you.

- Often people want to talk, but won't speak until someone asks how they are. Try asking open questions, like *'What happened about...'*, *'Tell me about...'*, *'How do you feel about...'*
- Repeat back what they say to show you understand and ask more questions.
- Focus on their feelings instead of trying to solve the problem- it can be of more help and shows you care.
- Respect what they tell you. Sometimes it's easy to want to try and fix a young person's problems, or give them advice. Try and let them make their own decisions.

How do I start a conversation with someone I'm concerned about?

You might feel that you don't know how to help someone, because you don't know what to tell them or how to solve their problems. You don't need to be an expert. In fact, sometimes people who think they have the answers to a problem are less helpful.

Don't forget that every person is different, so that what worked for one will not always work for another.

Find a good time and place

Ask gentle questions, and listen with care. Ask them how they feel.

If you're gentle and calm it's ok to bring up the subject of self-harm or suicide.

The more open the question the better. Questions that help someone talk through their problems instead of being able to say 'yes' or 'no' are the most useful.

Questions such as:

- 🕒 **When** – 'When did you realise?'
- 📍 **Where** – 'Where did that happen?'
- 🗨️ **What** – 'What else happened?'
- 👉 **How** – 'How did that feel?'
- 🤔 **Why** – be careful with this one as it can make someone defensive. '*What made you choose that?*' or '*What were you thinking about at the time?*' are more effective.

Find out how they feel

Revealing their innermost emotions – anger, sadness, fear, hope, jealousy, despair and so on – can be a huge relief.

It sometimes also give clues about what the person is really most worried about.

Check that they know where to get help

Useful questions you might ask them include:

- 🗨️ '*Who else have you talked to about this?*'
- 🗨️ '*What do you think about getting some help?*'
- 🗨️ '*Would you like me to come with you?*'

If you say something that appears to cause more upset, don't panic:

- 👂 show you are listening;
- 👂 look after yourself, and talk to someone too. You can always talk to Samaritans – our contact details are at the back of this booklet.

Memorials

This is a difficult issue that needs to be carefully managed, taking account of the wide range of feelings that are likely to be displayed.

It is natural to want to pay tribute to those who have died. However, it is important not to sensationalise or glamorise suicide as that may act as a trigger for anyone who is deeply affected. School managers should set a time limit for memorials (about two weeks). They may offer to forward cards and other tribute material to the family afterwards. Permanent memorials following a suspected suicide are generally to be discouraged.

Schools cannot control online memorials and other social networking activity following a suspected suicide. However, students should be warned about the risks of online memorials – their comments may become public/published without their permission, online memorials can attract negative and hurtful comment and anything that romanticises suicide can be harmful to those who are vulnerable. Schools could consider establishing an online memorial on their own website, which they can then moderate and remove after an agreed time.

Funerals

The nature of the student's death should not by itself encourage greater attendance at the funeral than it would for any other tragic death at the school.

We recommend that parents or guardians accompany students who want to attend.

Those who don't attend should have normal classes to go to.

If appropriate, engage the faith leader prior to the funeral to suggest that eulogies should be fitting and do not sensationalise what has happened.

Responding to suspected suicide

It can take many months for an inquest (or fatal accident inquiry in Scotland) to be held, and in many cases unexplained deaths are not given a verdict of suicide. Schools and authorities often have to act on whether an unexplained death is being treated as suicide.

In some cases, where there is an ongoing investigation or where the family does not want the cause of death to be disclosed (or reported as suicide), it can be challenging for a school to decide how to proceed.

In this situation, schools should state that the nature and cause of death are still being determined and that additional information will be forthcoming.

Acknowledge that there are rumours (which are often inaccurate), and remind students that rumours can be deeply hurtful, distressing and unfair to the deceased person, their family and their friends.

If there is an ongoing investigation, schools should check with local police before speaking about the death with students who may need to be interviewed by the authorities.

If the family does not want the nature or cause of death to be disclosed

While the fact that someone has died may be disclosed immediately, information about the nature and cause of death should not be disclosed until the family has been consulted. If the death has been declared a suicide but the family does not want this disclosed, someone from the school who has a good relationship with the family should contact them. They should explain that students are already talking about the death, and that having adults in the school community talk to students about suicide and its causes can help keep students safe.

If the family refuses to permit disclosure, schools can simply state that the family has requested that information is not shared. Schools can still take the opportunity to acknowledge rumours about suicide, and to address the topic of suicide in a responsible way to assist other young people who may be depressed or suicidal.

In addition, it is suggested that mental health professionals should be working alongside the school in helping to meet the immediate counselling needs of affected students.

Responding to attempted suicide

While suicide is the second most common cause of death among young people aged 10—24, most suicide attempts do not result in death.² Young people may return to school following a suicide attempt, and schools should not underestimate the impact of this on other students.

It is imperative that anyone who has attempted suicide is appropriately referred to and cared for by mental health professionals. Mental health professionals will be able to work alongside the school in the following key areas:

- Planning support for a student who has attempted suicide.
- Helping meet the immediate counselling needs of affected students.
- Identifying other vulnerable young people.

If a school is informed of an attempted suicide that took place away from the school or the attempt occurred without the awareness of other students, there is a small possibility that the spread of information may be contained. If complete containment of information is a real possibility, it should be discussed with the family as soon as possible. In such circumstances, any communication with staff, students and parents will be on a 'need to know basis' only, in consultation with the young person, their family and appropriate mental health professionals.

If the details of the attempted suicide are already known in the school population, schools may understandably be anxious about addressing this. Advice should be sought from the mental health professionals caring for the young person as they may be able to provide considerable assistance. It is essential that a support plan is developed and approved by an identified staff member (the school counsellor if the school has one), the student, the family and the mental health professionals before the student returns to school.

When meeting with the young person's family, critical areas for sensitive discussion are:

- What information is provided to which sections of the school community.
- The support plan for their child's return to school.
- The support for any siblings in the school.
- Liaison with the mental health professional.

² The World Health Organisation states that "...suicide attempts... are up to 20 times more frequent than completed suicide." www.who.int/mental_health/prevention/suicide/suicideprevent/en downloaded 3 December 2012.

Further Information about Step by Step

For further information and support either about suicide or developing a critical incident plan that includes suicide, please contact us.

✉ stepbystep@samaritans.org

☎ Freephone* 0808 168 2528

🌐 [samaritans.org/stepbystep](https://www.samaritans.org/stepbystep)

Samaritans can assist schools by offering:

- Assistance and advice about dealing with an attempted or suspected suicide.
- Talks to raise awareness of emotional health issues among young people.
- More information on our website.

*Calls are free from landlines and some mobile providers.

Other sources of support

British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy

Through the BACP you can find information about counsellors in your area. www.bacp.co.uk

ChildLine

Provides support services for children and young people. Phone the free, 24-hour helpline for children and young people in the UK about any problem. **Tel: 0800 1111** www.childline.org.uk

Choose Life: The National Strategy and Action Plan to prevent suicide in Scotland

www.chooselife.net

Cruse Bereavement Care

Promotes the well being of bereaved people and enables anyone bereaved by death to understand their grief and cope with their loss. The organisation provides support and offers information, advice, education and training services. www.cruse.org.uk

Cruse Bereavement Care Scotland

www.crusescotland.org.uk

Facing the Future

Support groups for people who have been bereaved by suicide developed by Samaritans and Cruse Bereavement Care. www.facingthefuturegroups.org

NAPEP UK: Local Authorities Educational Psychology Services Crisis Response Team Network

A support network for peers involved in Local Authority Educational Psychology Services that offer support to school communities following a traumatic incident. The network shares information, discusses best practice and provides the opportunity to respond to large scale cross border incidents in a co-ordinated way. www.napep.org

Samaritans

Can provide you with support any time of day or night by phone, email, or through face-to-face visits at a local branch. What you talk about stays between you. It's not a religious organisation, it's available to anyone, and you don't have to be suicidal.

Tel: 116 123 (this number is free to call)

Email: jo@samaritans.org

www.samaritans.org

Please note these are the main Samaritans contact details and not for the Step by Step or Schools service.

Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide (SOBS)

Aims to provide a safe, confidential environment in which bereaved people can share their experiences and feelings, so giving and gaining support from each other. It is staffed by many who have been bereaved by suicide.

www.uk-sobs.org.uk

Winston's Wish

Winston's Wish is the largest provider of services to bereaved children, young people and their families in the UK. They have lots of information and support available for children who are bereaved through suicide.

www.winstonswish.org.uk

YoungMinds

YoungMinds is the UK's leading national charity committed to improving the mental health and emotional well-being of all children and young people. **www.youngminds.org.uk**

Someone to talk to – people contact us when things are getting to them. They don't have to be suicidal.

We're always here – round the clock, every single day of the year.


A safe place – as volunteers we're ordinary people who give others the space to talk about what's troubling them.


People can be themselves – whoever they are, however they feel, whatever life's done to them.

We're a charity – it's the public's kind donations that help fund our service.

Contact Step by Step

 stepbystep@samaritans.org


 0808 168 2528*

 samaritans.org/stepbystep

Samaritans Registered Office
The Upper Mill, Kingston Road, Ewell, Surrey KT17 2AF
T 020 8394 8300 F 020 8394 8301

SAMARITANS

Step by Step

Information for staff 

This guidance forms part of Samaritans' Step by Step resources for communities working with and supporting young people. Step by Step is a Samaritans service offering support, resources and practical advice for adults who work with young people and their communities, that have been impacted by an attempted or suspected suicide.

If you would like to find out more about this service:

✉ stepbystep@samaritans.org ☎ 0808 168 2528

SAMARITANS

A suicide in a school is a very sad and traumatic event for students, staff, parents and the wider school community. Such an event can bring up a range of feelings and questions that you may never have experienced before. Suicide is an extremely difficult topic to talk about and deal with, particularly after the suspected suicide of a student or member of staff.

Samaritans has a wealth of experience in supporting people through difficult times. We hope that by sharing what we have learned with you, you will gain the knowledge and support you need to help you and your students cope with what has happened.

When there has been a suicide in the school community, it can throw up all kinds of feelings. Everyone acts or reacts in their own way. It's important to know that there is no right or wrong way of feeling.

How you may feel

- ◉ Angry
- ◉ Betrayed
- ◉ Confused
- ◉ Disbelief
- ◉ Fearful
- ◉ Guilty
- ◉ Hurt
- ◉ Numb
- ◉ Responsible
- ◉ Shock
- ◉ Tearful
- ◉ Withdrawn

You may experience one or more of these emotions and that's ok. Feelings vary from person to person.

You may also have lots of questions. That's also common, but often there are no answers. You may have to accept that many questions will always remain unanswered.

At this difficult time it is really important to take care of yourself, seek support and talk to others about how you are feeling. Try and be as kind to yourself as you can and take care of your personal needs.

Why do people take their own lives?

Suicide is a complex issue, usually with no single cause, and it is therefore not possible, or helpful, to generalise. Often it is a result of reaching a point where the person can see no other way to stop the pain. Sadly, most people thinking about suicide don't really want to die but just want the pain they are feeling to stop.

What can I do?

Talking with other staff and students about suicide is important at this time; it can help everyone cope with the trauma and grief. Talking to students and listening to their concerns can help highlight students who are having difficulty coping.

You may not know exactly what to say or do – most people don't. You don't need to have ready answers or solutions. Being there for the students and listening to them is often enough.

How to support students

- Allow them to talk and ask questions.
- Acknowledge what has happened and that it will affect everyone in different ways.
- Give them time to cry when they need to.
- Listen without judging. Let them know you are there for them. They may go over the story time and time again. That's fine – it's part of the healing process.
- Even if they seem to have lots of family and close friends around, they might still need support. It's important that they know they can talk to someone about their grief, so they don't feel alone with it. If you feel unable to listen or support students, that's ok, let them know where they can go to for support and refer any students of concern.
- Maintain a routine and normality, this helps a sense of certainty and safety in students.
- Allow them to talk about the deceased, focusing on the sense of loss, memories; avoid discussing details of how someone died and any conversations that glorify the death.
- Enable students to talk about suicide, directing conversations toward healthy coping strategies, how to support one another and where to seek help. Keep a strict time limit on this (5-10 minutes) so that students do not dwell or become distressed by a prolonged discussion.
- Dispel any rumours but do not talk about suicide notes or the method of suicide.
- Be aware of warning signs and identify young people who you feel may be at risk.

Starting difficult conversations

If you're worried about a young person, try to get them to talk to you.

Often people want to talk, but won't speak until someone asks how they are. Try asking open questions, like *'What happened about...'*, *'Tell me about...'*, *'How do you feel about...'*

Repeat back what they say to show you understand and ask more questions. Focus on their feelings instead of trying to solve the problem – it can be of more help and shows you care. Respect what they tell you.

- Find a good time and place.
- Ask gentle questions, and listen with care. Ask them how they feel.
- If you're gentle and calm it's ok to bring up the subject of self-harm or suicide.
- The more open the question the better. Questions that help someone talk through their problems instead of being able to say 'yes' or 'no' are the most useful.

Questions such as:

- ◉ **When** – *'When did you realise?'*
- ◉ **Where** – *'Where did that happen?'*
- ◉ **What** – *'What else happened?'*
- ◉ **How** – *'How did that feel?'*
- ◉ **Why** – be careful with this one as it can make someone defensive. *'What made you choose that?'* or *'What were you thinking about at the time?'* are more effective.

Find out how they feel. Revealing their innermost emotions – anger, sadness, fear, hope, jealousy, despair and so on – can be a huge relief. It sometimes also gives clues about what the person is really most worried about.

Are there warning signs that someone is suicidal?

It can be very difficult to tell if someone is feeling suicidal, especially if they find it hard to talk about their feelings. People in crisis react in different ways. But there may be clues in behaviour changes, such as if someone is unusually withdrawn or animated.

Other signs that someone might be struggling to cope include:

- ◉ talking specifically about taking their own life
- ◉ seeing no future for themselves
- ◉ giving away their belongings
- ◉ seeing no way to resolve their fears or anxieties
- ◉ becoming more isolated from friends and family
- ◉ unusual displays of anger or impatience towards friends and family
- ◉ being tearful for no obvious reason
- ◉ not being able to cope with small everyday events
- ◉ increased risk-taking.

If you are concerned about someone in your school or college, encourage them to talk. If someone is talking about having suicidal thoughts and feelings, **always take it seriously.**

How do I deal with my own grief as well as supporting others?

Take care of yourself; seek and accept support from others. It will be better if the routine of the school can keep going in as normal a way as possible to provide some structure for everyone. So if you can take some time to compose yourself, the best way to proceed may be to brief staff members that are further from the tragedy to keep the day to day timetable running in the background.

When and how to seek help

It's important not to struggle with difficult emotions on your own. If your feelings become overwhelming or it's difficult to cope with small everyday events, find someone to talk to. No matter how awful things seem, there is always someone you can reach out to. Counsellors, family members, teachers or support staff can be of great help when you are feeling low. If you'd prefer to talk to someone in confidence who is not part of your school or family, you can contact Samaritans. We are there at any time of the day or night to help you. You can also contact us by email or text or by visiting one of our branches.

Talking can help

Looking after your emotional health is just as important as looking after your physical health. Everyone faces challenges in their lives and sometimes we all need someone to talk to, to help us cope. There is no shame in asking for help when you feel like coping on your own is too difficult. Samaritans know from experience how important it is that you feel able to talk about things that are troubling you.

Where else can I go for support and information?

Breathing Spaces Scotland is a free, confidential phone and web-based service for people in Scotland experiencing low mood, depression or anxiety: www.breathingspacescotland.co.uk

British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) can provide information about counsellors in your area: **0870 443 5252**, www.bacp.co.uk

Child Bereavement UK provides support to families grieving the loss of a child, and advice for professionals working with bereaved families: **01494 568900**, www.childbereavement.org.uk

ChildLine provides support services to children and young people: **0800 1111**, www.childline.org.uk

Help is at Hand provides people affected by suicide with both emotional and practical support: www.supportaftersuicide.org.uk

Samaritans are available round the clock, every single day of the year. We can help you talk through whatever is troubling you, find the answers that are right for you and offer support: **116 123** (this number is free to call), email jo@samaritans.org

Winston's Wish provides practical support and guidance to bereaved children, young people and their families: **08452 030405**, www.winstonswish.org.uk

Young Minds offers advice and support to parents worried about their children's emotional or mental wellbeing: **0808 8025544**, www.youngminds.org.uk

Someone to talk to – people contact us when things are getting to them. They don't have to be suicidal.

We're always here – round the clock, every single day of the year.

A safe place – as volunteers we're ordinary people, and keep all our conversations private.

People can be themselves – whoever they are, however they feel, whatever life's done to them.

We're a charity – it's the public's kind donations that help fund our service.

 [samaritans.org](https://www.samaritans.org)

SAMARITANS



How to talk about Suicide (for adults working with young people)

“What should I say to a young person who is affected by a recent suicide or who is asking questions about a recent suicide?”

- Remind them that suicide is a tragic and terrible event **but it is rare**
- Suicide is not a common response to life’s challenges-most people experiencing troubles do not die by suicide
- Most people reach out, talk to others and see other ways of coping and go on to lead healthy, normal lives
- There are many treatments/supports for emotional distress and they work-it may need time and patience but many others have overcome similar feelings (*many more than those who die by suicide*)
- Tell them it is important to keep looking for those who will help and respond – don’t give up-and help their friends to keep looking if they are worried about them
- Remind young people that if you die-there is no coming back-you do not get to make a movie or talk to anyone anymore or see the impact of your death-it is permanent
- There is no “blame” if someone dies by suicide-it is no-ones fault-no-one is “responsible”
- Suicide is complex and multi-layered and not the result of any one issue
- We may never discover a “reason” for someone’s death by suicide
- People at the time of taking their life feel hopeless and this impacts on the way they think
- It is very important to remember that rumour and gossip is distressing for those left behind-it is not helpful to speculate

Consider the age of the young person you are talking to and be honest about how the person died-any confusion or misunderstanding may cause distress later on:

Always remind young people to talk about how they are feeling-find the trusted person and let them know. There is always a way to support and help them-it may take a bit of time but there are plenty of people around to do this

Suicide

Sometimes students/pupils (and colleagues) may be overwhelmed by their own feelings and express thoughts of suicide. This can be when their feelings overwhelm their coping strategies. The feelings may have built up gradually and they may change and fluctuate at different times or they may have come more suddenly. The reasons may be multiple and complex. Each person is unique and individual. The important thing to remember is that they have trusted and disclosed to you. This usually indicates they don't want to act on their thoughts but want help to cope with them.

Some key things to remember:

It is ok to ask directly about suicide-speaking openly and with sensitivity decreases the likelihood of them acting on their feelings

Let them talk about how they feel and encourage them with open questions and give them time to talk

Take them seriously and don't judge them

Encourage them to seek help- be honest that you can't keep it to yourself and discuss with them who they could talk to

What should I do:

- *Don't be afraid to talk about suicide –don't be afraid to ask if someone has been having thoughts of suicide*
- *Have a sensible, honest and open discussion*
- *Respect and listen to what young people are saying*
- *Be patient, caring and kind*
- *Re assure young people that difficult feelings can be overcome and that they are not alone*
- *Most people talking about suicide want to end the distress and pain they feel -they don't want to die but think it's the only way out*

Type of information and phrases which may be helpful when telling pupils of a death:

- I have some sad news. xxxxxxxxxxxx from our school was missing and has now been found dead.
- You may already know that xxxxxxxxxxxx from the school has now been found dead
- At this moment we are not sure of exactly what happened – the police are still investigating.
- Some people are saying that xxxxxxxxxxxx took her/his own life – died by suicide but we cannot confirm this at the moment.
- This will be difficult for everyone and we will try and answer questions as best we can.
- Please talk to any member of staff, psychologist, Samaritans, other (in school) about how you are feeling or if you need some time – we have a support room available.
- You may also wish to talk to your family about this
- Everyone will need time to absorb this information and we may each react in different ways.
- This is very sad and we are all upset but until we know the full facts please try not to 'speculate' or guess what has happened as this will only cause distress to the family
- We need to support each other and especially support xxxxxxxxxxxx family and close friends.
- Information is available (written). Staff are available.
- Today we will keep to class/timetable and structure because we need to keep going and have a normal routine to follow. This is not because we are ignoring what has happened but it helps us all to keep going and have a focus for getting through the days ahead.
- However, we know you may need time out / to talk / to think and you may get upset. This is O.K. Please tell us.

Guidelines for a significant Change and Loss event

What we might see

Reactions

These may present themselves months or years after the event so it may be difficult for staff or other pupils to relate behaviours to the past event.

Don't be surprised by an unusual behaviour! All behaviour is communication

Explanations

Reactions may be triggered by environmental cues

Children may be affected by a song, article of clothing, figure of speech that reminds them of their loved one.

Special occasions can be difficult

Note significant dates which may affect child e.g. birthdays. Make sure other staff are aware of these and possible reactions from child.

Consider possible reactions to certain class/assembly topics

e.g. making father's/mother's day cards – do ask the child if they wish to be included.

Don't be afraid to acknowledge potentially difficult times with child

e.g. I know Christmas is coming up and this may be a very different and difficult time for you all this year without your dad/mum – so don't forget if it helps you can always come and see me.

Revisit Nurture Training and Change and Loss Materials:
Staff Tips and Change Activities and Information Booklet.

What we can do

Maintain structure, normal rules and expectations of behaviour.

Quietly check on a regular basis how things are going.

Help child work out and meet priorities.

If problems arise, ask child what they think could be done to improve situation

Organise ways for child to cover missed work and consider other ways of helping child complete homework tasks

Consider use of a time in card

Support the maintaining of positive relationships with peers and staff

Sensitivity to the child's needs is crucial

Child may benefit from formal support from peers and school staff.

Look out for indication of isolation, incidents in playground.

Consider impact of loss on child when considering consequences.

e.g. it may be inappropriate to punish for bringing incorrect equipment to school but lashing out at a peer may require sanction.

Use Restorative Approaches to support conversations

Staged Intervention & Additional Support

If appropriate the child can be identified as having additional support needs and placed on staged intervention.

Concentration is often diminished, child is often tired and disorganised and may need more of your help than usual.

Consider strategies to support concentration and motivation e.g. Shorter, high interest tasks. Refer to Staged Intervention model.

Consider consulting Management team, Pupil Support, Principal Teacher, Child Protection Officer etc

If child's needs seem to last unusually long or seem unusually severe, talk to your Educational Psychologist.

For further information on change and loss, please contact your school Psychologist.

Educational Psychology Service, North Ayrshire Council, 5th Floor,
Cunninghame House, Irvine KA12 8EE Tel: 01294 324500



North Ayrshire Council
Comhairle Siorrachd Àir a Tuath

Primary Activity Booklet

Change and Loss

**Educational Psychology Service &
North Ayrshire Primary Schools**



North Ayrshire Council
Comhairle Siorrachd Àir a Tuath

Change and Loss Activities

Contents

Nurturing North Ayrshire's Learners	3
Success Criteria	4
Impact	5
Essential Preparation	6
Tips for Practitioners	7
Lesson 1 – Introduction to the concept of change	8
Lesson 2 – Expressing feelings about change	10
Lesson 3 – Self-efficacy	12
Lesson 4 – Optimism	14
Lesson 5 – Consolidation activities	16
Pupil Questionnaire	17
Procedural Guidelines	18
Additional Resources	19
Appendices	20

Project Team

Xanthe Wylie, Psychological Service
Martin Morrison, Corsehill Primary
North Ayrshire Primary Nurture Staff

Nurturing North Ayrshire's Learners

In North Ayrshire we are committed to supporting and sustaining whole school Nurturing practice and ethos in our educational establishments, where the importance of transition in children and young people's (cyp) lives is recognised and supported.

Many cyp encounter stressful change and loss events, sometimes defined as Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). For example cyp may live in homes where parents or carers are emotionally absent from their cyp's lives, family members are experiencing addiction, or family relationships have broken down. Change and loss can impact negatively on children's ability to engage in learning, however schools and school staff can mitigate the impact of change and loss through whole class discussion around strategies to manage the challenge that change and loss can bring.

Research is clear that where establishments provide a consistent whole school nurturing approach and implement evidence-based social and emotional approaches, resilience is developed (Zins & Elias, 2006, Health Equity Evidence Review, 2014). This evidence-based resource promotes the Health and Wellbeing of all cyp, supports the principals behind Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC) and delivery of the following Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) Experience and Outcome.

I am learning skills and strategies which will support me in challenging times, particularly in relation to change and loss (HWB Experience & Outcome 0-07a, 1-07a, 2-07a, 3-07a, 4-07a) (SEED, 2004)



Principles and Practice

Learning in health and wellbeing ensures that children and young people develop the knowledge and understanding, skills, capabilities and attributes which they need for mental, emotional, social and physical wellbeing now and in the future. Learning through health and wellbeing enables children and young people to:

- make informed decisions in order to improve their mental, emotional, social and physical wellbeing
- experience challenge and enjoyment
- experience positive aspects of healthy living and activity for themselves
- apply their mental, emotional, social and physical skills to pursue a healthy lifestyle
- make a successful move to the next stage of education or work
- establish a pattern of health and wellbeing which will be sustained into adult life, and which will help to promote the health and wellbeing of the next generation of Scottish children.

(www.curriculumforexcellencescotland.gov.uk , 2013)

Experience and Outcome

A Curriculum for Excellence (SEED, 2004), expects that schools will support children experiencing change and loss. The following activities are designed to allow practitioners to discuss skills and strategies regularly in ways which take account of the stage of development and understanding of each child and young person and are relevant and realistic for them. These activities are designed for early years and primary aged pupils and aim to:

- 1 introduce children to feelings associated with change and loss.
- 2 teach children that all feelings are OK.
- 3 give children vocabulary to express feelings about change.
- 4 introduce the fact that everyone experiences change and the emotions associated with change pass.
- 5 introduce the fact that children can overcome challenges and there are people around them who can help.

Impact

Change activities catalyse discussion of change and loss, can be easily implemented into existing classroom practice and there is evidence that activities can support the development of self-efficacy, empathy and optimism in classes, and have a positive impact on levels of support, communication and teacher confidence.

Self-efficacy

'the P1s were able to say to the pre-schoolers ' I can do that..'

(P1 teacher)

Empathy

'Kids are taking it (Change book)out again – there are volunteers that read it out...they are reading stories to each other and asking questions.'

(P3/4 teacher)

Optimism

'Its almost a change of mindset for the class....they are much more positive.. it's more we can do something, we have the find the silver lining game all the time....I've left my homework – what's the silver lining?'

(Primary 6 teacher)

Support

'This is really helping me...I feel so much better now.'

(Pupil in small group)

Open communication

'Kids are more prepared to talk..two or three of the more aggressive kids have spoken to me'

(Primary 3/4 teacher)

'You let out what's bad..let people know.'

(Primary 4 pupil)

Essential Preparation

1 In advance

- Read tips for practitioners
- Vital to create culture in classroom where pupils feel relaxed and willing to share their feelings.
- Develop Full Value Contract to establish ethos for Change activities.
- Although a great deal of the work is discussion based, it may be useful for pupils to have a Change jotter where they can keep work and reflect upon their ideas as they grow and develop into young adults. Alternatively, some teachers like pupils to use whiteboards so they can erase their thoughts after activities.
- Use the questionnaire on page 17 with your class pre and post change lessons to measure the impact of discussions.

2 How to start

- Plan initial lessons at the start of term to support open communication and the development of positive relationships.
- Activities can be introduced within the context of school life, for example, for early and first level children, activities could be introduced during inductions to new classes. For second level children, it may be useful to introduce the activities around the time of a trip away from school, discussions about puberty with the school nurse or transitions to secondary school.
- It is essential to be responsive to situations and disclosures as they arise. Note that this cannot be timetabled. Be aware of confidentiality however remember that in potential Child Protection cases it is the Class Teachers role to pass on concerns to Senior Management.

3 How to use

- Ideally activities should be used with the whole class but they can be used in small groups and with individuals.
- Adapt the activities in any way you feel is appropriate for your class.

- Try to work through activities fairly closely together and make sure that the self-efficacy and optimism activities are covered.
- Plenaries are essential. End of lesson reviews may be more useful than Success Criteria to learn what the children have understood. Success Criteria tend not to be helpful as they may drive the direction of conversations that ideally would be pupil-led.
- Measure the impact of the activities. You could use the questionnaire to measure impact of lessons pre and post and pay attention to the comments children make as they are faced with changes throughout the school year.
- Note that for sustained impact, regular conversations with cyp about positive strategies for managing change should be actively facilitated.

4 How to manage children's responses

- Use an example from your own situation to start the conversation.
- Where children appear reluctant to participate, tell them they can anonymously write down something that is worrying them and put it in the worry box at the end of the lesson / use an 'I want to talk to you' card.
- Offer support at golden time or after class.
- Answer questions honestly - don't be afraid to say you don't have all the answers but you will try and find out for them (refer to tips point 6 for further detail)

5 Consolidate on learning

- Once activities are covered, frequently revisit coping strategies and ways of looking positively at change.
- Think flexibly and use all areas of the curriculum to consolidate the message about managing change and optimism throughout the school year.
- The key message we want children and young people to receive is that change is a normal part of life and we can all use strategies and supports to help us cope with change.

Tips for Practitioners

1 Take care of yourself and your colleagues

Be prepared to acknowledge your own feelings about change and loss should they emerge. At the end of a difficult day take time for yourself and others if they need it. You have a unique contribution to make in supporting and caring for children experiencing change and loss. Adults working in NA establishments:

- know the child and their personality
- often know the culture within the class
- adults are experts in providing children with knowledge

2 Listen

A caring empathetic relationship is key for the child. Make eye contact with the child, sit near to them at their level, allow them to talk, nod in response to their words and acknowledge the situation.

“I can see that you are sad.”

3 Ask how the child is feeling

During check-ins ask “Are you doing OK today?”
“If it helps to talk, you can always come and see me or another adult.”

4 Use clear language

“I am sorry that your granny died.” Avoid evasive terms like ‘she went to sleep’.

Normalise the child’s reaction

5 “The way you are feeling is normal, this has happened to other people too and this feeling will change.”

6 Let the child know they don’t have to be grieving all the time

“It’s OK not to be sad all the time; it’s OK to have fun.”

7 Answer questions honestly

If a child asks a question to which you are not sure how to respond, ask them what they think about the issue.

Don’t be afraid to say you don’t know but you will try and find out for them.

“That’s an interesting question, let me think about that and get back to you.” This gives you a chance to clarify your response.

8 Give the child permission to express how they feel

Use tools like ‘I want to talk to you’ cards or a worry box.

9 Consider how you are linking with families

Good communication with home stimulates emotional coping. Help families give adequate information, check what the family has told the child, check out where areas of difficulty lie and try to work out strategies with the child and their family to make school life easier.

10 Remember what you say can have a lasting effect on children

When the time is right, consider how to address change with the whole class. Education about change and loss supports resilience.

Lesson 1 – Introduce the concept of change

Learning Intention

I am learning skills and strategies which will support me in challenging times, particularly in relation to change and loss (HWB Experiences & Outcomes 0-07a, HWB 1-07a, HWB 2-07a, HWB 3-07a, HWB 4-07a)

A Curriculum for Excellence (SEED, 2004)

Throughout this lesson, children are

- introduced to feelings associated with change and loss
- learning that all feelings are OK
- given vocabulary to express feelings about change

Potential resources

Early and first level activities	Second level activities
CHANGE VOCABULARY Photographs/flashcards of people who are sad/happy, Feelings Fans (not included in appendices)	CHANGE VOCABULARY Examples from current affairs, literature, Feelings Cards

Introduction

After introducing and explaining the learning intention, set the context e.g. natural event, character in a story or song about change. You could say something like:

Today we are going to talk about feelings that come when things change.

Change Vocabulary Activity

- Show class pictures of characters in story / photographs of people experiencing change
- Ask class if anyone can guess what they feel like? Can anyone guess why?
- Broaden the discussion by referring to more examples of change, using a personal example if appropriate e.g. starting with a new class, or when a pet died.
- Ask children to discuss in groups or pairs a time when things have changed for them. What happened? What did they feel / think / do?
- Brainstorm words associated with change and write them up where they are visible to whole class e.g. happy, nervous, sad, worried, excited, scared, angry,

- If appropriate, get children to pick a word and give examples of when they have had that feeling.
- For second level children, play Bingo with feelings cards – this can extend children’s range of vocabulary linked to feelings.
- Children can practice spelling and writing sentences with new vocabulary.

Top Tips

- May be useful to start small with a physical object like a set of keys, classroom object, PE kits then develop the conversation building in the language and developing emotional literacy
- As an example of characters with different feelings, you could use the 7 dwarves with younger children
- Encourage discussion and paraphrase, repeat or clarify as necessary to improve understanding. Empathise as appropriate and praise each child for his or her participation.

Plenary

To summarise the discussion, make the point that feelings are integral to who we are and are always present. You could say something like:

Feelings are something that we have all the time. Feelings are very important signals that tell us what is going on around us and inside of us. If we pay attention to our feelings, they can help us understand things.

All feelings are OK to have. There is no such thing as a ‘bad feeling’. Some feelings feel uncomfortable or upsetting. Some feelings can feel comfortable and uncomfortable at the same time! But no matter how feelings feel inside, they are all OK and important to have (don’t worry if the children don’t understand this yet, these are difficult concepts.)

Lesson 2 - Expressing feelings about change

Learning Intention

*I am learning skills and strategies which will support me in challenging times, particularly in relation to change and loss (HWB Experience & Outcome 0-07a, 1-07a, 2-07a, 3-07a, 4-07a)
A Curriculum for Excellence (SEED, 2004)*

Throughout this lesson, children are

- given vocabulary to express feelings about change
- introduced to the fact that everyone experiences change and the emotions associated with change pass

Potential resources

Early and first level activities	Second level activities
EXPRESSING FEELINGS - Art materials: paper, crayons, pens, Paper plates, digestive biscuits/ oatcakes, icing sugar, water, sweets THINGS WE CAN CHANGE / CANNOT CHANGE SHEET 1	EXPRESSING FEELINGS - Art materials: paper, crayons, pens, Faces sheet THINGS WE CAN CHANGE / CANNOT CHANGE SHEET 2

Introduction

After introducing and explaining the learning intention, point out that some things, like starting school, losing a pet etc can make us feel really excited or really sad. When different things happen to us, we feel different things.

Expressing Feelings Activity

- Ask children to work in groups or pairs and to think of a time when something changed – what were they doing? What did it feel like? Get pupils to talk about this for 2 minutes, if appropriate some could feedback to the class.
- Give each child a face sheet/ art materials / biscuits etc. They are going to make 3 different faces. A face that describes how they felt at that time, a face that shows how they feel today and a face they can decide for themselves.
- To finish, get each child to show their face to their partner/group/class and talk about the feelings represented and what it was that made them feel that way.

Things we can change and things we can't activity

- Ask children to work in small groups or pairs, whichever is most appropriate
- Give out the visual prompts to groups and ask them to categorise them into things they can change and things they can't.
- Ask children to explain their choices. Encourage discussion and paraphrase, repeat or clarify as necessary to improve understanding.
- Get children to write down questions they have about change and debate amongst the class.

Top Tips

- Empathise as appropriate and praise each pupil for his or her participation. Listen closely to pupil's responses to determine where to lead discussion next.
- It is important to emphasise that the teacher does not have all the answers

Plenary

- To summarise the discussion, you could say something like:

Different things happen to us all the time and these can make us feel and think lots of different things. Today we've been thinking and talking about feelings that come with change and you've been talking about lots of different changes that sometimes you have a bit of control over and sometimes you don't. The important thing to remember is that everyone experiences change and that the feelings and emotions that come with change will pass in time.

Lesson 3 – Self efficacy (confidence about achieving success on tasks)

Learning Intention

*I am learning skills and strategies which will support me in challenging times, particularly in relation to change and loss (HWB Experience & Outcome 0-07a, 1-07a, 2-07a, 3-07a, 4-07a)
A Curriculum for Excellence (SEED, 2004)*

Throughout this lesson, children

- discuss the fact that everyone experiences change and the emotions associated with change pass
- introduce the fact that children can overcome challenges and there are people around them who can help

Potential resources

Early/first/second level activities
MY LIFE BEFORE/AFTER THINGS CHANGED - worksheets blank / lined
AGONY AUNT ACTIVITY - Flip chart, paper, different coloured felt tip pens, Coping Cards

Introduction

After introducing and explaining the learning intention, re-iterate the fact that change happens to everyone, sometimes major, sometimes minor. Refer to previous examples from the previous lesson or your own experiences if appropriate. Point out that it is important to remember that we are all experts in managing change – sometimes changes happen that can make us feel very sad or scared, but these feelings will pass and things that seem very difficult, get easier.

My life before and after things changed activity

- Ask children to think of a time when they had something hard to do and they managed it, for example, learning to ride a bike or swim, reading some letters, going from nursery school to primary school / P1 to P2 / infant playground to senior playground.
- What made it hard?
- How worried were they on a scale of 1-10? (1 very worried – 10 not at all worried) (Early / First level could use smiley faces.)
- Brainstorm for comments about how they managed to work through the challenge?
- If children say that their friend/parent or school staff helped them, point out that when things are hard there are always people around to help. Asking for help can be a sign of strength.

- How do they feel about it now on a scale of 1-10? (1 very worried – 10 not at all worried)
- Use MY LIFE BEFORE THINGS CHANGED SHEETS and ask children to draw their feelings, thoughts and behaviour before the challenge and after the challenge. Children should record their scaled responses so they can see the change before and after.
- If appropriate, children could write about their experiences before and after.

Agony aunt activity

- In groups get children to suggest ways of overcoming various challenges. These can be generated by the children or you could use the examples detailed in the appendix on page 30.
- Where children advise asking for help, reiterate the message that people are always around who will support them when they are experiencing challenges.
- For second level children, use COPING CARDS on page 31 if necessary to catalyse ideas.
- Distribute cards to groups and ask children to debate pros and cons of potential solutions since some may be useful and some less so.
- Get children to put cards into categories:
 1. Useful
 2. Quite useful
 3. No difference
 4. Useless
 5. Harmful
- Get groups to compare responses and explain why they have chosen particular positions.

Top tips

- It is important to normalise the fact that everyone reacts differently to different situations.
- NB Self efficacy (confidence about achieving success on tasks) and self esteem (beliefs about our own self worth, part of overall personality, grows through success in achieving tasks) are different.
- Promoting a growth mindset in the classroom can support development of self efficacy (www.mindsetonline.com)

Plenary

- To summarise the discussion, you could say something like

Since you were born you have all managed to get through big changes in your lives – you have all coped with leaving your homes to come to school, you are learning to meet new people and today you have proved how you are able to solve difficult challenges that happen – you are experts in change, well done!

Change happens to everyone, sometimes big, sometimes little (could refer to previous examples from class if appropriate). We are all experts in managing change – sometimes changes happen that can make us feel very sad or scared but these feelings will pass and things that seem very difficult, get easier. Sometimes we have to work very hard to manage challenges and sometimes we need help from other people but this is normal.

Lesson 4 – Optimism

Learning intention

*I am learning skills and strategies which will support me in challenging times, particularly in relation to change and loss (HWB Experience & Outcome 0-07a, 1-07a, 2-07a, 3-07a, 4-07a)
A Curriculum for Excellence (SEED, 2004)*

Throughout this lesson, children

- discuss looking at change in a positive way
- practice applying an optimistic perspective during challenging times

Potential resources

Early/first/second level activities
OPTIMISM FIND THE SILVER LINING NO ADDITIONAL RESOURCES REQUIRED AND APPROPRIATE TO REPEAT ACTIVITIES ACROSS ALL CfE LEVELS

Introduction

After introducing and explaining the learning intention, introduce the idea that sometimes changes happen that are difficult and can make us feel sad but there is always something in the world that we can feel good about. Tell the class that today we are going to talk about things to be glad about.

Optimism activity

- Ask children to work in groups or pairs and discuss / write some things to be glad about?
 1. today
 2. outside
 3. in school
 4. yourself
 5. the future / tomorrow / next year
- Get children to feed-back their thoughts to the class and note their ideas on the board.
- Ask children what other ways they know of cheering themselves up when they are feeling a bit sad? Brainstorm suggestions and write them up on the board.
- Ask children which strategies they might use – vocalizing a strategy may increase the likelihood that the strategy will be used.

Find the silver lining activity

- Introduce different scenarios, children have to find the silver lining, for example:

Early level scenarios

- Your teacher is going to a new school
- You have lost your favourite toy
- You have no friends

First level scenarios

- You don't understand the new work in class
- Your friends won't include you in their game anymore
- Someone has taken your pencil

Second level scenarios

- Granny has come out of hospital, gone home, stopped eating and died.
- You are finding your homework really difficult this year
- Your body is changing and you don't know why

Plenary

To summarise the discussion, make the point that however challenging a situation can seem, there is always a positive that can come out of it. You could say something like:

- Life is full of challenges and change. Sometimes things happen that we think are too hard to manage and that can make us feel low. We can train ourselves to think about challenges in a good way, to find the silver lining when times are tough. And if we practice this, it will become something that we do without having to think about it. It doesn't mean that challenges will disappear but that when they come, we see them in a positive way, one that might help us see opportunities instead of problems.
- Incorporate the 'Find the Silver Lining' activity into the everyday running of your classroom so that children regularly practice re-framing skills.

Lesson 5 – Consolidating self-efficacy and optimism activities

Learning intention

*I am learning skills and strategies which will support me in challenging times, particularly in relation to change and loss (HWB Experience & Outcome 0-07a, 1-07a, 2-07a, 3-07a, 4-07a)
A Curriculum for Excellence (SEED, 2004)*

Throughout this lesson, children are

- recapping on feelings associated with change and loss
- reasserting the fact that all feelings are OK
- using vocabulary to express feelings about change
- consolidating the message that everyone experiences change and the emotions associated with change pass
- reasserting the fact that children can overcome challenges and there are people around them who can help
- practising applying an optimistic perspective during challenging times

Activities

After introducing and explaining the learning intentions, discuss with children ideas for summarising what they have learned about managing change. Activities may include:

- a) devising a slogan about change,
- b) creating a Health and Wellbeing area or book so children can access this as a resource when they are looking for a word to describe a feeling.
- c) creating posters or a collage about change,
- d) making a film about managing change for younger classes moving up the school,
- e) making a leaflet or information booklet for new pupils coming into the school,
- f) making a podcast of tips for pupils who are finding a change difficult to manage,
- g) creating a play about managing change.

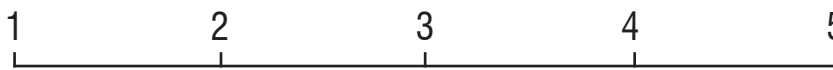
Carrying Out Research

Name : _____ Class : _____

Date : _____ Age: _____

I am someone who:

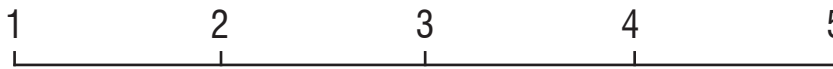
likes school



does not like school



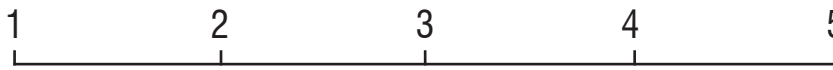
likes change



does not like change



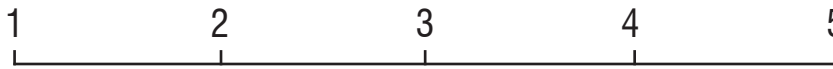
can manage when things change



can't manage when things change



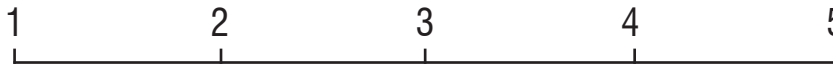
has control over my life



has no control over my life



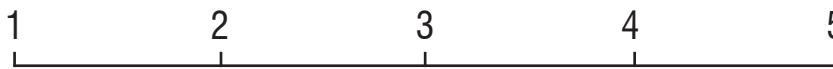
knows what to do when I am feeling worried



doesn't know what to do when I am feeling worried



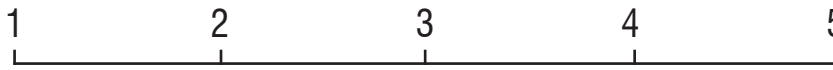
knows where to get help if I am feeling worried



doesn't know where to get help if I am feeling worried



feels positive about the future



feels negative about the future



Procedural Guidelines

You may have questions about how to support a pupil within school. Use these procedural guidelines for information on how to best support pupils as they deal with change and loss.

What we might see

Reactions

These may present themselves months or years after the event so it may be difficult for staff or other pupils to relate behaviours to the past event.

Don't be surprised by an unusual behaviour! All behaviour is communication

Explanations

Reactions may be triggered by environmental cues

Children may be affected by a song, article of clothing, figure of speech that reminds them of their loved one.

Special occasions can be difficult

Note significant dates which may affect child e.g. birthdays. Make sure other staff are aware of these and possible reactions from child.

Consider possible reactions to certain class/assembly topics

e.g. making father's/mother's day cards – do ask the child if they wish to be included.

Don't be afraid to acknowledge potentially difficult times with child

e.g. I know Christmas is coming up and this may be a very different and difficult time for you all this year without your dad/mum – so don't forget if it helps you can always come and see me.

Revisit Nurture Training and Change and Loss Materials:
Staff Tips and Change Activities and Information Booklet.

What we can do

Maintain structure, normal rules and expectations of behaviour.

Quietly check on a regular basis how things are going.

Help child work out and meet priorities.

If problems arise, ask child what they think could be done to improve situation

Organise ways for child to cover missed work and consider other ways of helping child complete homework tasks

Consider use of a time in card

Support the maintaining of positive relationships with peers and staff

Sensitivity to the child's needs is crucial

Child may benefit from formal support from peers and school staff.

Look out for indication of isolation, incidents in playground.

Consider impact of loss on child when considering consequences.

e.g. it may be inappropriate to punish for bringing incorrect equipment to school but lashing out at a peer may require sanction.

Use Restorative Approaches to support conversations

Staged Intervention & Additional Support

If appropriate the child can be identified as having additional support needs and placed on staged intervention.

Concentration is often diminished, child is often tired and disorganised and may need more of your help than usual.

Consider strategies to support concentration and motivation e.g. Shorter, high interest tasks. Refer to Staged Intervention model.

Consider consulting Management team, Pupil Support, Principal Teacher, Child Protection Officer etc

Additional Resources

Ideally the issue of change can be woven into interdisciplinary studies and discussed in line with naturally occurring events for increased impact. Here are some suggestions for how this could be done:

EXPRESSIVE ARTS	<p>Art, dance, drama and music are ideal areas to engage children in the area of change and loss. Here are some ideas :</p> <p>Art – re-building Glasgow School of Art ,Picasso’s Guernica, Van Gogh (discussion of artist’s loss of mental health)</p> <p>Drama – Up (U), ET (U), Circle Time discussion using puppets</p> <p>Music – One Love Manchester benefit concert, Fabby Dabby Dee ‘It’s good to be me’ www.fischy.com (Early Level)</p> <p>David Bowie ‘Changes’</p>
LANGUAGES	<p>A large number of literary texts incorporate issues of change and loss. Here are some examples:</p> <p>YOUNGER READERS</p> <p>A. Deacon - <i>Beegu</i> K. Gray - <i>Mum and Dad Glue</i> O. Jeffers - <i>The Heart and the Bottle, How to Catch a Star, Lost and Found, The Way Back Home</i> S. Lean - <i>A Dog Called Homeless</i> A. Meek - <i>I’m Special, I’m Me</i> S. Murphy - <i>Pearl (Granny with dementia)</i> M. Mundy - <i>Mad Isn’t Bad</i> M. Walsh - <i>Living with Mum and Living with Dad : My Two Homes</i> J Witek - <i>In My Heart: A Book of Feelings</i></p> <p>OLDER READERS</p> <p>A. Carter (Ed.) - <i>Virago Book of Fairy Tales</i> A. Jen Mah. - <i>Chinese Cinderella</i> P. Ness - <i>A Monster Calls</i> S. Mason - <i>Moon Pie</i> M. Morpurgo - <i>A Medal for Leroy</i> M. Rosen & Q.Blake - <i>Michael Rosen’s Sad Book</i> J. Ure - <i>Ice Lolly</i> N. Singer - <i>The Flask</i> Jacqueline Wilson - <i>books</i></p>
MATHEMATICS	Via discussion of how mathematical symbols change functions
RELIGIOUS AND MORAL EDUCATION	Changing perspectives about religion and philosophies
SCIENCES	Climate change, changes in body
SOCIAL STUDIES	Use naturally occurring events – change and loss are ubiquitous ‘Daily What’ (GLOW)
TECHNOLOGIES	Advances in social media, changes in technology e.g. Snapchat, instagram

Appendices

Lesson 1 – Introduction to the concept of change

Could be used for bingo cards (photocopy onto card and separate into boards containing 12 words)

hurt	rejected	afraid
angry	dismayed	delighted
unwanted	upset	determined
frustrated	worried	proud

abandoned	peaceful	betrayed
excited	jealous	broken hearted
powerless	happy	calm
stressed	sad	lost

flat	devastated	unappreciated
relieved	insecure	guilty
embarrassed	unloved	all over the place
lonely	friendless	ashamed

inconsolable	to blame	responsible
bad tempered	proud	weak
anxious	grumpy	powerless
aggressive	thoughtful	confused

confident	glad	concerned
weird	shocked	satisfied
nervous	amazed	strong
hurt	rejected	afraid

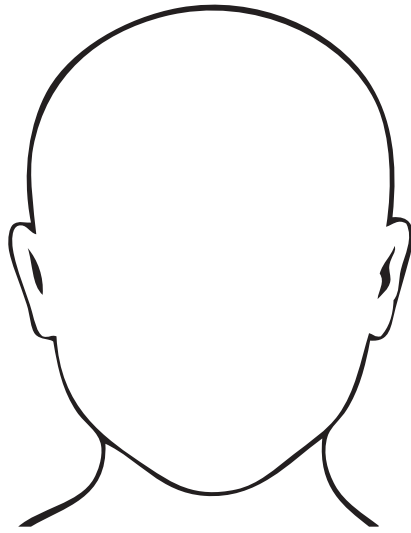
angry	dismayed	delighted
powerless	happy	calm
bad tempered	proud	weak
weird	shocked	satisfied

nervous	amazed	strong
embarrassed	unloved	all over the place
abandoned	peaceful	betrayed
hurt	rejected	afraid

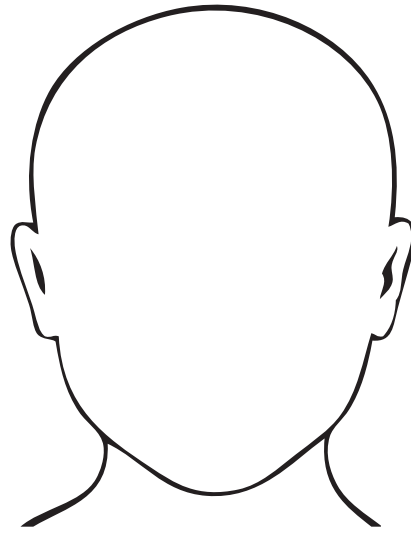
confident	glad	concerned
lonely	friendless	ashamed
hopeful	defiant	depressed
unwanted	upset	determined

Lesson 2 – Expressing feelings about change

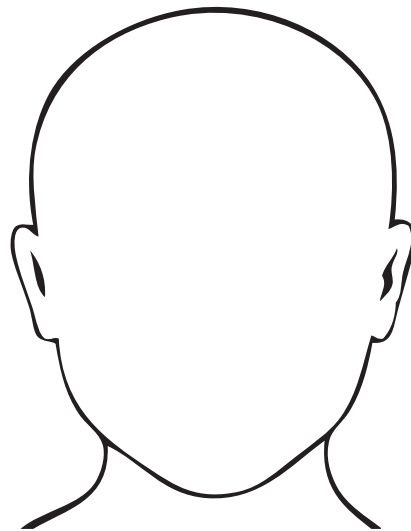
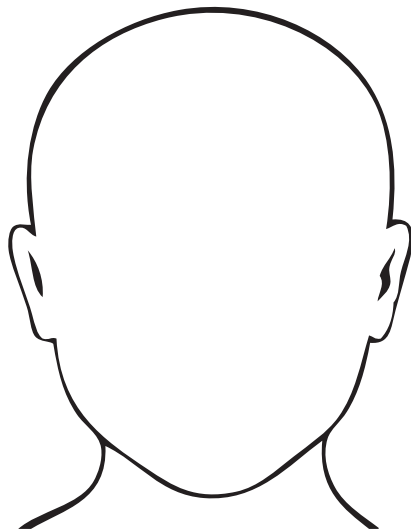
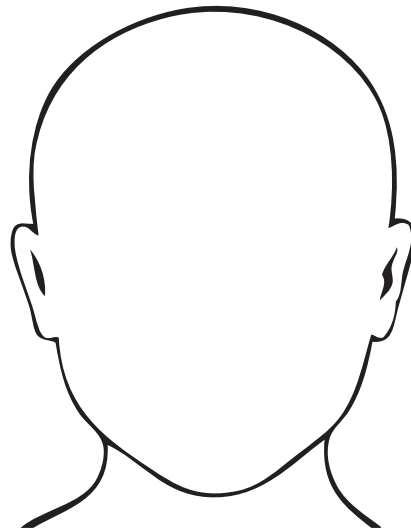
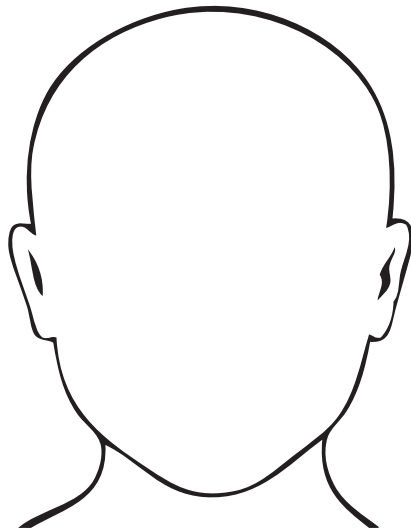
Faces



worried

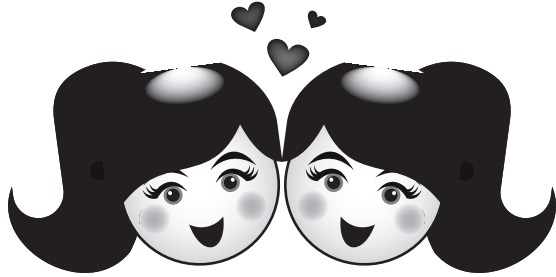


excited



Things we can change and things we can't

Friends



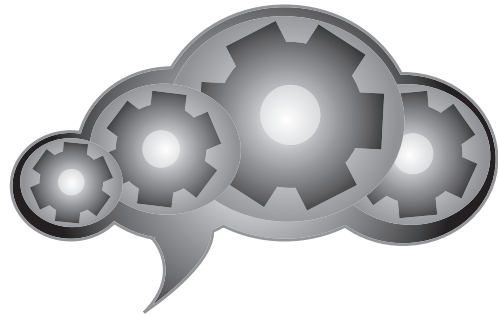
Your room



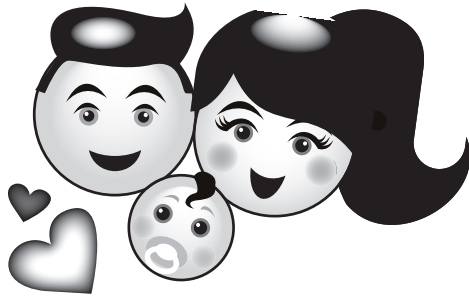
Hairstyle



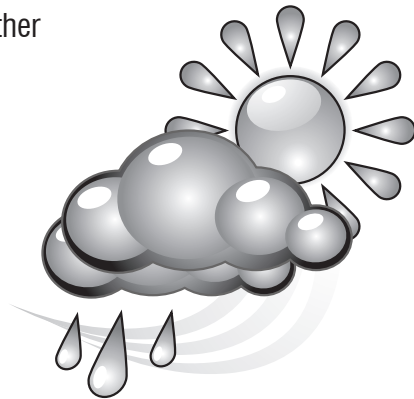
Behaviour



Family



Weather



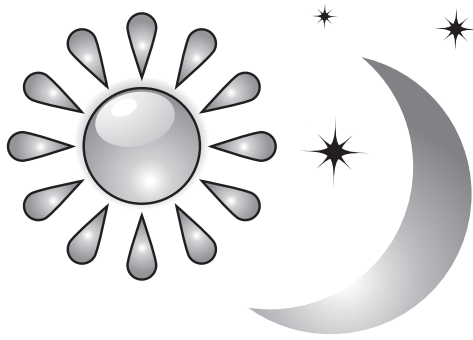
Clothes



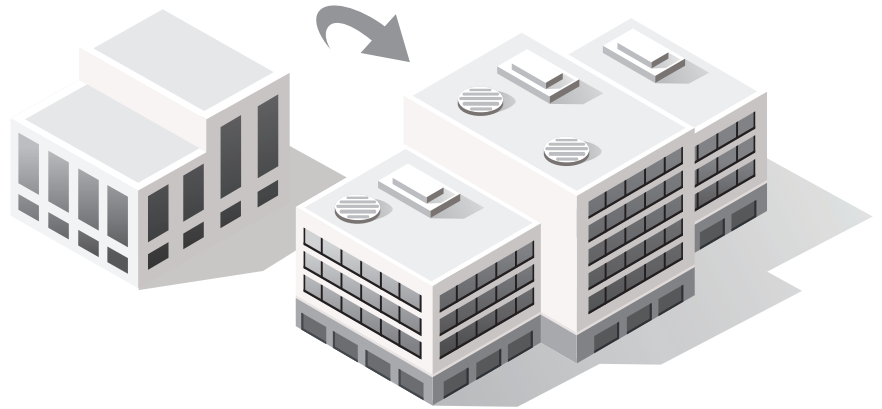
Death



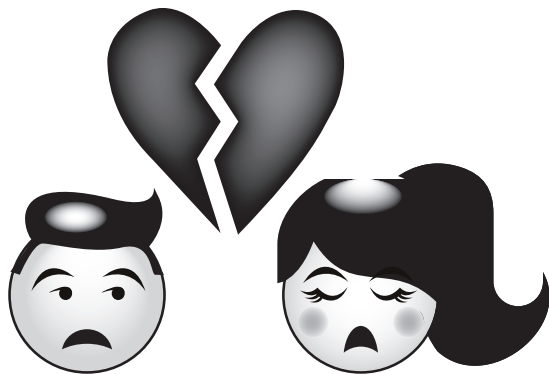
Day and Night



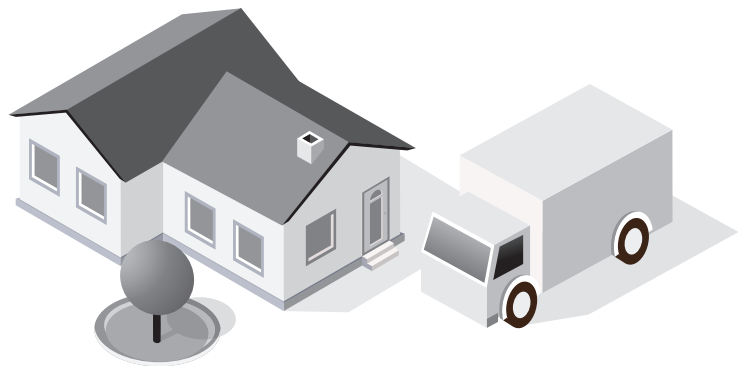
Moving from primary to secondary



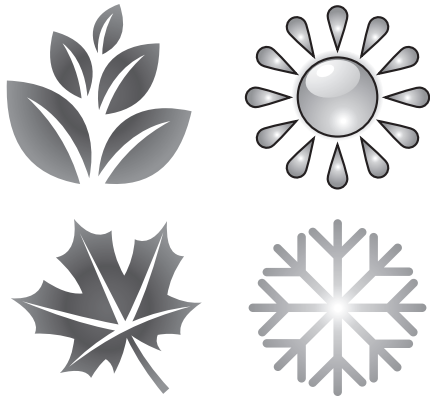
Divorce



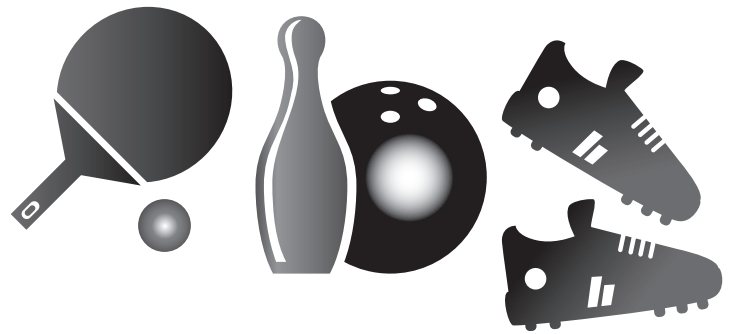
Moving house



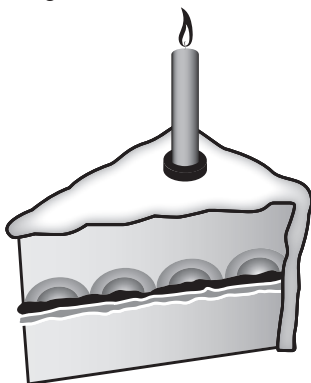
Seasons



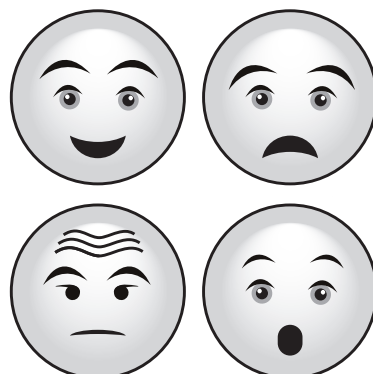
Hobbies



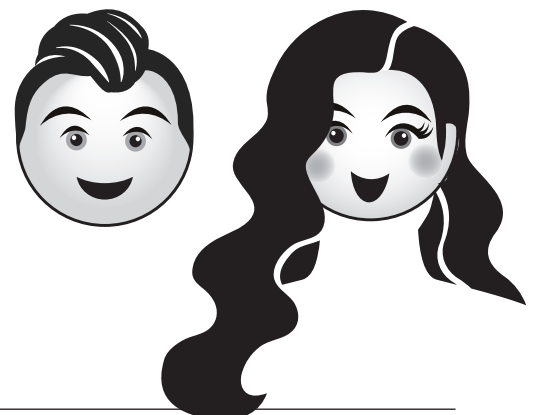
Getting older



Feelings



Your appearance



Lesson 3 – Self Efficacy (confidence about achieving success on tasks)

My life before things changed

EARLY / FIRST LEVEL

My life before things changed

My life after things changed

My life before things changed.....

My life after things changed.....

Agony aunt scenarios

EARLY LEVEL

Dear Big Brother,

My little rabbit died and I feel so sad. I can't stop crying. Please give me some advice.

From Harry

Dear Cool Cousin,

I feel a bit worried about going to my new class next year. Any advice?

From Vicki

Dear Thoughtful Thelma,

I get a sore tummy when Mrs Monkey is in our class. Please help!

From Talkative Tommy

Dear Soul Sister,

I'm frightened to learn to swim. What should I do?

From Fiona Flipper

FIRST LEVEL

Dear Concerned Cousin,

I can't get the hang of the new dance steps for my exam. Yikes!

From Lady Gaga

Dear Agony Aunt,

I am really struggling to learn the recorder. Help!

From Tommy Tootlington

Dear Moaning Monica,

My parents seem sad just now. I'm worried I've upset them. Any advice?

From Lonely Lesley

Dear Unflappable Uncle,

I'm moving to a new school in June and I'm worried about having no friends. Any advice?

From Gavin Going

SECOND LEVEL

1. You have a project to do for the end of the week and you haven't started.....
2. Your friend moved away to another school today and you miss them.....
3. You are going into S1 next month and are worried that you won't be able to find your new classes.....
4. Your granny died last week and you are feeling very sad.....
5. You are feeling a bit nervous because you have to do a talk in school tomorrow.....
6. You have lost your cat and can't find her anywhere.....
7. You are moving to a new house far away from your friends.....
8. Your mum is having a baby and you don't know what will happen to you....
9. Your dad is away from the house a lot and you don't see him very often.....
10. Your class are doing assembly this morning and you are scared you'll forget the words....

Coping cards

do sport	laugh	tell the teacher
cry	go to bed early	listen to music
call a help line	make a plan/list	talk to friends
worry	ignore the problem	talk to someone at home
think positively	read a book	pretend everything is OK
tell yourself you can do it	complain	keep trying
give it 100%	don't think about it	go for a walk
text your friend	get advice from the internet	put up with it

References

Carver, C. S., Scheier, M. F., & Segerstrom, S. C. (2010). *Optimism*. Clinical psychology review

Hattie, J & Yates, G.(2014). *Visible Learning and the Science of How We Learn*. Routledge

UCL Institute of Health Equity (2014) Health Equity Evidence Review 2, accessed 5th July 2017

www.insituteofhealthequity.org

www.mindsetonline.com

Zins, J.E and Elias, M.J (2006). *Social and Emotional Learning*. In G.G.Bear & K.M.Minke .(Eds). Children's Needs III, (pp1 – 13). National Association of School Psychologists.

Project Team

Xanthe Wylie, Psychological Service (Email: xwylie@north-ayrshire.gov.uk)

Taryn Moir, Psychological Service (Email: tmoir@north-ayrshire.gov.uk)

North Ayrshire Nurture Staff

Martin Morrison, Nurture Teacher, Corsehill Primary

For further information on Change and Loss, please contact your school Psychologist.

Educational Psychology Service, North Ayrshire Council,
Cunninghame House, Irvine KA12 8EE Tel: 01294 324500



North Ayrshire Council
Comhairle Stiorrachd Àir a Tuath

Secondary Activity Booklet

New Perspectives

Getting your head around
dealing with Change and Loss

**Educational Psychology Service &
North Ayrshire Secondary Schools**



North Ayrshire Council
Comhairle Siorrachd Àir a Tuath

New Perspectives

Getting your head around dealing with change and loss

Contents

Health and Wellbeing	3
Principals and Practice Summary	4
Impact	5
Essential Preparation	6
Tips For Practitioners	7
Lesson 1 – Review of The Year	8
Lesson 2 – Expressing Feelings About Change	10
Lesson 3 – Self Efficacy	12
Lesson 4 – Optimism	14
Lesson 5 – Consolidation	16
Procedural Guidelines	17
Subject Specific Resources	18
Appendices	19

Health and Wellbeing

The important issue of children and young people's mental health and wellbeing is increasingly being recognised as an area of priority both nationally and locally. This resource supports the principals behind Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC) and delivery of the following Curriculum for Excellence Experience and Outcome.

*I am learning skills and strategies which will support me in challenging times, particularly in relation to change and loss
(HWB Experience & Outcome 0-07a, 1-07a, 2-07a, 3-07a, 4-07a)
(SEED, 2004)*



Principles and Practice

Learning in health and wellbeing ensures that children and young people develop the knowledge and understanding, skills, capabilities and attributes which they need for mental, emotional, social and physical wellbeing now and in the future. Learning through health and wellbeing enables children and young people to:

- make informed decisions in order to improve their mental, emotional, social and physical wellbeing
- experience challenge and enjoyment
- experience positive aspects of healthy living and activity for themselves
- apply their mental, emotional, social and physical skills to pursue a healthy lifestyle
- make a successful move to the next stage of education or work
- establish a pattern of health and wellbeing which will be sustained into adult life, and which will help to promote the health and wellbeing of the next generation of Scottish children.

(www.curriculumforexcellencescotland.gov.uk , 2013)

Experience and Outcome

A Curriculum for Excellence (SEED, 2004), expects that schools will support children experiencing change and loss. The following activities are designed to allow practitioners to discuss skills and strategies regularly in ways which take account of the stage of development and understanding of each child and young person and are relevant and realistic for them. These activities are designed for secondary aged pupils and aim to facilitate:

- 1 discussion with young people about the feelings associated with change and loss.
- 2 reinforcement of young people's understanding that all feelings are OK.
- 3 further development of young people's vocabulary so that they can express feelings about change.
- 4 a deepening of the understanding that everyone experiences change and the emotions associated with change pass.
- 5 reinforcement of the fact that young people can overcome challenges and there are people around them who can help.

Impact

New Perspective activities catalyse discussion of change and loss, can be easily implemented into existing classroom practice and there is evidence that activities can support the development of empathy and optimism in classes, and have a positive impact on levels of support, communication and teacher confidence.

Empathy

'This S2 class, which has had its ups and downs as a class..these lessons were a turning point, they worked well together and they've reached a whole new level of maturity'

(S2 teacher)

'A very challenging class, probably the hardest class in S3, there were no repercussions after discussion, no niggles which were there before....a high tariff boy was in tears about his parent's divorce and it was like the others realised what some kids are going through'

(S3 teacher)

Optimism

'the classes will be quieter....I'll be more challenged...more sociable...I'll learn more'

(4 pupils discussing transition from P7 to S1)

Support

'This is really helping me...I feel so much better now.'

(Pupil in small group)

Open communication

'lots of the chat was about school, teachers, seasons, moving into S2..dead animals'

(S1 teacher report)

Teacher Confidence

'Staff were able to offer advice and felt confident to discuss change'

(Head of Skills Development Team)

Essential Preparation

1 In advance

- Read tips for practitioners
- Vital to create culture in classroom where pupils feel relaxed and willing to share their feelings.
- Develop Full Value Contract to establish ethos for New Perspective and loss activities.
- Although a great deal of the work is discussion based, it may be useful for pupils to have a New Perspectives folder or jotter where they can keep work and reflect upon their ideas as they grow and develop into young adults.

2 How to start

- Activities can be incorporated within personal development or PSE lessons. Ideally aspects of these activities could be covered across all departments with teachers delivering key messages as part of their daily teaching. A list of ways to introduce the area of change and loss and idea of new perspectives is provided at the end of this booklet on Page 21.
- Activities can be introduced within the context of school life, for example, third level pupils, activities could be introduced during at points of transition in the year, for example at the change of timetable in June. For fourth level pupils, it may be useful to introduce the activities around the time of a trip away from school, discussions about transitions beyond secondary school etc.
- It is essential to be responsive to situations and disclosures as they arise. Be aware of confidentiality however remember that in potential Child Protection cases it is the Class Teachers role to pass on concerns to Senior Management.

3 How to use

- Ideally activities should be used with the whole class but they can be used in small groups and with individuals.
- Adapt the activities in any way you feel is appropriate for your class.
- Try to work through activities fairly closely together and make sure that the self-efficacy and optimism activities are covered.

4 How to manage pupil's responses

- Where pupils appear reluctant to participate, tell them they can anonymously write down something that is worrying them and put it in the worry box at the end of the lesson / use an 'I want to talk to you ' card.
- Offer support after class.
- Answer questions honestly - don't be afraid to say you don't have all the answers but you will try and find out for them (refer to Tip 6 for further detail P7)

5 Consolidate on learning

- Once activities are covered, frequently revisit coping strategies and ways of looking positively at change.
- Think flexibly and use all areas of the curriculum to consolidate the positive message about managing change throughout the school year.
- The key message we want children and young people to receive is that change is a normal part of life and we can all use strategies and supports to help us cope with change.

Tips for Practitioners

1 Listen

A caring empathetic relationship is key for the child. Make eye contact with the child, sit near to them at their level, allow them to talk, nod in response to their words and acknowledge the situation “I can see that you are sad”.

2 Ask how the child is feeling

During check-ins ask “Are you doing OK today?” “If it helps to talk, you can always come and see me or another adult”.

3 Use clear language

“I am sorry that your granny died”. Avoid evasive terms like “she went to sleep”.

4 Normalise the child’s reaction

“The way you are feeling is normal, this has happened to other people too and this feeling will change”.

5 Let the child know they don’t have to react as adults

“It’s OK not to be sad all the time; it’s OK to have fun”.

6 Answer questions honestly

If a child asks a question to which you are not sure how to respond, ask them what they think about the issue.

Don’t be afraid to say you don’t know but you will try and find out for them.

“That’s an interesting question, let me think about that and get back to you” - gives you a chance to clarify your response.

7 Give the child permission to express how they feel

Use tools like ‘I want to talk to you’ cards or a worry box.

8 Consider how you are linking with parents

Good communication with home stimulates emotional coping. Help parents give adequate information, check what the family has told the child, check out where areas of difficulty lie and try to work out strategies with the child and their family to make school life easier.

9 Remember what you say can have a lasting effect on children

When the time is right, consider how to address change with the whole class. Education about change and loss supports an easier adjustment process.

10 Take care of yourself

Be prepared to acknowledge your own feelings about change and loss should they emerge. At the end of a difficult day take time for yourself. Teachers have a unique contribution to make in supporting and caring for children experiencing change and loss:

- Teachers know the child and their personality
- Teachers know the culture within the class
- Teachers are experts in providing children with knowledge
- Children trust teachers

Lesson 1 – Review of The Year

Learning intention

I am learning skills and strategies which will support me in challenging times, particularly in relation to change and loss (HWB Experiences & Outcomes 0-07a, 1-07a, 2-07a, 3-07a, 4-07a) A Curriculum for Excellence (SEED, 2004)

Throughout this lesson, pupils

- discuss feelings associated with change and loss
- are introduced to the fact that all feelings are OK.

Potential resources

Third and fourth level
Review of the Year graphs p – pupils can draw graphs into jotters or alternatively photocopy graphs for each pupil in advance

Introduction

After introducing and explaining the learning intention, use an example from your own situation to start the conversation or plot your own Review of the Year to demonstrate the normality of change e.g. in June the timetable changed and Senior pupils left and I lost contact with pupils I have known for 6 years.

Review of the Year activity

- Ask pupils to plot their own graphs
- Encourage discussion and comparison in groups or pairs – this reinforces the fact that change and fluctuating feelings are normal for us all.
- It is unlikely that there will be a pupil who has a completely flat line. There is generally always some movement up or down. What does this tell us?
- If there was a slump, can the cause be identified? Note that some pupils may not wish to discuss reasons for a slump and this is OK.
- Was there a decline before starting school in August? Why might that be the case for some?
- Is there a correlation between seasons and mood?
- Identify points where feelings become more positive e.g. at what time did you start to bounce back?
- Ask pupils to discuss what triggered their resilience e.g. time passing, talking with friends.

- Brainstorm feelings about change and write them on the board. Ask pupils to explain why they have given a particular example where appropriate.
- Pupils may wish to draw symbols or decorate their graph.

Top tip

- To summarise the discussion, make the point that feelings are integral to who we are and are always present. You could say something like:
 - *Feelings are something that we have all the time. Feelings are very important signals that tell us what is going on around us and inside of us. If we pay attention to our feelings, they can help us understand things.*
 - *All feelings are OK to have. There is no such thing as a 'bad feeling'. Some feelings can feel uncomfortable and upsetting. Some feelings can feel comfortable and uncomfortable at the same time! But no matter how feelings feel inside, they are all OK and important to have.*

Lesson 2 – Expressing Feelings About Change

Learning intention

I am learning skills and strategies which will support me in challenging times, particularly in relation to change and loss (HWB Experience & Outcome 0-07a, 1-07a, 2-07a, 3-07a, 4-07a) A Curriculum for Excellence (SEED, 2004)

Throughout this lesson, pupils are

- given more opportunities to express feelings about change
- introduced to the fact that everyone experiences change and the emotions associated with change pass

Potential resources

Third level	Fourth level
Review of the Year graph Things we can change and things we can't (VISUALS VERSION)	Review of the Year graph Things we can change and things we can't
It may be useful to photocopy 'Things we can change' prompts, cut up and give a selection to each group or pair	

Introduction

After introducing and explaining the learning intentions, point out the fact that when things change, we can experience a change in feelings. Refer to the Review of the Year graph for an example and point out that some things, like starting school, losing a pet etc can make us feel really excited or really sad.

If appropriate, give pupils 2 minutes to quickly re-cap on a time when something changed for them. What were they doing? What did it feel like?

Things we can change and things we can't activity

- Ask pupils to work in small groups or pairs, whichever is most appropriate
- Give out the (visual) prompts to groups and ask them to categorise them into things they can change and things they can't.
- Ask pupils to explain their choices. Encourage discussion and paraphrase, repeat or clarify as necessary to improve understanding.
- Get pupils to write down questions they have about change and debate amongst the class.

Top tips

- To summarise the discussion, you could say something like:

These are issues which can be interpreted in a wide range of ways according to individual differences/ circumstances and personalities. Everyone experiences change and the emotions associated with change pass.

- Empathise as appropriate and praise each pupil for his or her participation. Listen closely to pupil's responses to determine where to lead discussion next.
- It is important to emphasise that the teacher does not have all the answers.

Lesson 3 – Self Efficacy

Learning intention

I am learning skills and strategies which will support me in challenging times, particularly in relation to change and loss (HWB Experiences & Outcomes 0-07a, 1-07a, 2-07a, 3-07a, 4-07a) A Curriculum for Excellence (SEED, 2004)

Throughout this lesson, pupils

- consolidate their knowledge that everyone experiences change and the emotions associated with change pass
- are introduced to the message that they can overcome challenges and there are people around them who can help

Potential resources

Third and fourth level
Feeling the fear
Things i can do something about - flip chart, paper, different coloured felt tip pens

Introduction

After introducing and explaining the learning intentions, re-iterate the fact that change happens to everyone, sometimes major, sometimes minor. Refer to previous examples from the previous lesson or your own experiences if appropriate. Point out that it is important to remember that we are all experts in managing change – sometimes changes happen that can make us feel very sad or scared, but these feelings will pass and things that seem very difficult, get easier.

Feeling the fear activity

- Ask pupils to think of a challenging time from their past when they had something hard to do and they managed it .
- What was the challenge? Brainstorm ideas if necessary e.g learning to ride a bike, learning to swim, going from primary school to secondary / S1 to S2, going to party / event where you didn't know anyone
- Scale the stress at the time (on a scale of 1 -10, 10 = maximum stress) Ask pupils to explain what made it hard? What were they thinking? What were they feeling?
- Scale the stress felt about the challenge now (1 – 10). Ask pupils to give detail about their thoughts and feelings.

- Ask pupils to explain how they managed to work through this? How did they work through the challenge till things got better? If pupils say that their friend/parent or school staff helped them, point out that when things are hard there are always people around to help. Asking for help can be a sign of strength.
- If the challenge had never happened, what would you never have learned about yourself?

Things I can do something about activity

- In groups get pupils to suggest ways of overcoming various challenges. These can be generated by pupils or you can use the examples detailed in the appendix on Page .
- Use POTENTIAL SOLUTION CARDS on Page if necessary to catalyse ideas.
- Ask pupils to debate pros and cons of potential solutions since some may be useful and some less so.

Top tips

- To summarise the discussion, make the point that pupils all have the ability to take some control and manage change. You could say something like:
- Since you were born you have all managed to get through big changes in your lives – you have all coped with moving from primary school to secondary school, and meeting and getting along with new people. Today you have proven how you are able to solve difficult challenges that happen. Sometimes we have to manage difficult situations by asking people around us for help and it is important to remember that being able to recognise when we need help from others is a strength. There will always be people around you who can help if you ask. You are experts in managing change, well done!

Where pupils advise asking for help, reiterate the message that people are always around who will support them when they are experiencing challenges.

It is important to normalise the fact that everyone reacts differently to different situations. What one individual thinks and feels may be quite different to another and this is normal.

Lesson 4 – Optimism

Learning intention

I am learning skills and strategies which will support me in challenging times, particularly in relation to change and loss (HWB Experiences & Outcomes 0-07a, 1-07a, 2-07a, 3-07a, 4-07a) A Curriculum for Excellence (SEED, 2004)

Throughout this lesson, pupils

- practice re-framing changes in a positive way
- develop their ability to apply an optimistic perspective during challenging situations

Potential resources

Third and fourth level activities
Optimism Finding the silver lining My power playlist
No additional resources required and appropriate to repeat activities across all cfe levels

Introduction

After introducing and explaining the learning intentions, introduce the idea that sometimes changes happen that are difficult and make us feel sad but there is always something in the world that we can feel good about. Today we are going to talk about things to be glad about.

Optimism activity

- Ask pupils to discuss / write down some things to be glad about?
 1. today
 2. outside
 3. in school
 4. yourself
 5. the future e.g. tomorrow, next year
- Get pupils to feed-back their thoughts to the class and note their ideas on the board.

- Ask pupils how they cheer themselves up when they are feeling a bit sad? Brainstorm suggestions and write them up on the board.
- Ask pupils which strategies they might use – vocalizing a strategy may increase the likelihood that the strategy will be used.

Finding the silver lining activity

- Introduce different scenarios, pupils have to find the silver lining, for example:

Third level scenarios

- Your favourite teacher is going to a new school
- You have lost your new mobile phone
- Someone is giving you hassle at school
- You have family problems

Fourth level scenarios

- You've lost your Saturday job
- You've failed your assessment
- You didn't get a place at the college you wanted
- You feel no-one understands you anymore

My power playlist activity

- Ask pupil to think about the music they like to hear and how it can complement or change how they are feeling or their mood.
- Ask pupils to compile their personal list - see Page 28 for example

Top tips

- To summarise the discussion, make the point that however challenging a situation can seem, there is always a positive that can come out of it. You could say something like:
 - *Life is full of challenges and change. Sometimes things happen that we think will never be resolved and that can make us feel low. We can train ourselves to think positively about challenges, to find the silver lining when times are tough. And if we practice this, it will become something that we do automatically. It doesn't mean that challenges will disappear but that when they come, we see them with a new perspective, one that might help us see opportunities instead of problems.*

Incorporate the 'Find the Silver Lining' activity into the everyday running of your classroom so that pupils regularly practice re-framing skills.

Lesson 5 – Consolidating Self-efficacy and Optimism

Learning intention

I am learning skills and strategies which will support me in challenging times, particularly in relation to change and loss (HWB Experiences & Outcomes 0-07a, 1-07a, 2-07a, 3-07a, 4-07a) A Curriculum for Excellence (SEED, 2004)

Throughout this lesson, pupils are

- recapping on feelings associated with change and loss
- reasserting the fact that all feelings are OK
- using vocabulary to express feelings about change
- consolidating the message that everyone experiences change and the emotions associated with change pass
- reasserting the fact that they can overcome challenges and there are people around them who can help

Activities

Discuss with pupils ideas for summarising what they have learned about managing change. Activities may include:

- a) devising a slogan about change,
- b) creating posters or a collage about change,
- c) writing a blog or tweeting about change for the school web-site,
- d) making a film about managing change for younger classes moving up the school,
- e) making a leaflet or information booklet for new pupils coming into the school,
- f) making a podcast of tips for pupils who are finding a change difficult to manage,
- g) creating a play about managing change.

You may find that you are in contact with parents or carers who are finding it hard to support their children through change and loss. Here are some tips for them – hard copies available.

Procedural Guidelines

You may have questions about how to support a pupil within school. Use these procedural guidelines for information on how to best support pupils as they deal with change and loss.

What we might see

Reactions

These may present themselves months or years after the event so it may be difficult for staff or other pupils to relate behaviours to the past event.

Don't be surprised by an unusual behaviour!

Revisit Change and Loss

Materials are available; Teachers Tips, Change Activities and Information Booklet.

Explanations

Reactions may be triggered by environmental cues

Children may be affected by a song, article of clothing, figure of speech that reminds them of their loved one.

Special occasions can be difficult

Note significant dates which may affect a child e.g. birthdays. Make sure other staff are aware of these and possible reactions from a child.

Consider possible reactions to certain class/assembly topics

e.g. making father's/mother's day cards – do ask the child if they wish to be included.

Don't be afraid to acknowledge potentially difficult times with the child

e.g. I know Christmas is coming up and this may be a very different and difficult time for you all this year without your dad/mum – so don't forget if it helps you can always come and see me.

What we can do

Maintain structure, normal rules and expectations of behaviour.

Quietly check on a regular basis how things are going.

Behaviour management and relationships with peers and staff

Sensitivity to child's needs is crucial.

Staged Intervention & Additional Support

If appropriate the child can be identified as having additional support needs and placed on staged intervention.

Help child work out and meet priorities

If problems arise, ask the child what they think could be done to improve the situation.

Organise ways for the child to cover missed work and consider other ways of helping the child complete homework tasks.

Consider use of a time out card.

Child may benefit from support from peers and school staff

Look out for indication of isolation, incidents at break times.

Consider impact of loss on a child when considering sanctions

e.g. It may be inappropriate to punish a child for bringing incorrect equipment to school but lashing out at a peer may require sanction.

Consider strategies to support concentration and motivation

Concentration can often be diminished; the child is often tired and disorganised and may need more of your help than usual. e.g. shorter, high interest tasks may be helpful.

Note on Staged Intervention and consult Management Team, Pupil Support, Principal Teachers or Child Protection Officer if necessary.

Pass on information to next session's teacher via Pastoral Notes

Subject Specific Resources

Subject	Ideas
Art & Design	How art influences social change e.g Guernica, changing perspectives on style e.g. modern art
Biology	Photosynthesis, fertilization, aging, neural pathways
Chemistry	Changes in form, chemical states
Design & Technical Studies	Development of design project, for example, overcoming difficulty with design, solving problems.
English	A large number of literary texts incorporate issues of change and loss. Here are some examples: William Shakespeare. 'Romeo and Juliet' . Seamus Heaney. 'Blackberry Pickings' JK Rowling. Harry Potter series
Geography	Climate change, loss of ice caps
History	Social change, revolution, war, Schindlers List (15)
Home Economics	Change and loss can have an impact on family dynamics and how families eat together, change of diet and ingredients used over time e.g. wars and rationing
Information & Communication Technology	Advances in social media, changes in technology
Mathematics	Younger pupils discussing how mathematical symbols change functions, older pupils studying calculus investigates change See also www.themathematicsofchange.com
Modern Languages	Refer to cultural changes in countries, for example: France – issues with banlieues, La Haine (15), Spain – Spanish Civil War ,Pans Labyrinth (18), The Motorcycle Diaries (18) Germany – falling of the Berlin wall Italy – phenomena of young adult Italians remaining in the family home.
Modern Studies	Change and loss ubiquitous in current affairs
Music (not exclusive to music class)	Vast numbers of songs around dealing with change and loss. Here are some examples: The Beatles 'She's Leaving Home' REM ' Everybody Hurts Sometimes' Green Day 'Time of Your Life' Noah & The Whale ' 5 Years Time' Pink Floyd ' Wish You Were Here'
Physics	The Big Bang, climate change
Physical Education	Changes in body, skill levels with practice of a sport, lifestyle changes
Religious and Moral Education	Changing perspectives about religion and philosophies

Appendices

Lesson 1 – Review of The Year

Scale your feelings for each month of the year. 1 = Very Low to 10 = Elated .

10												
9												
8												
7												
6												
5												
4												
3												
2												
1												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec

Lesson 2 – Expressing Feelings About Change

Things we can change and things we can't

THIRD LEVEL ACTIVITY

BREAK UPS



YOUNG CARER



BEREAVEMENT



NEW HOME



FAMILY SPLIT



ILLNESS



HOW PEOPLE SEE ME



TRAUMA



MONEY



CHOOSING OPTIONS



SEXUAL HEALTH



FRIENDS



ADDICTION



MY APPEARANCE



RESPONSIBILITY



FEELINGS



FOURTH LEVEL ACTIVITY

Break ups

Young carer

Bereavement

New home

Family split

Illness

Money

How people
see me

Friends

Trauma

Sexual health

Choosing options

Addiction

Feelings

Responsibility

My appearance

*Going to university
/ college / work*

Lesson 3 – Self Efficacy

Feeling the fear activity

Think of a challenging time from your past and use this to reflect on your coping mechanisms.

What was the challenge?

Scale the stress felt at the time (1 – 10, 10 = max)

Thoughts and feelings I had during this time

Scale the stress felt now (1 – 10, 10 = max)

Thoughts and feelings I have now

If the challenge had never happened, what would I never have learned about myself?

Things I can do something about activity

POTENTIAL CHALLENGES

THIRD LEVEL

I just can't sleep	I feel like giving up in English
I have loads of responsibilities	I don't know how to study
I am being bullied	I have issues at home and they are private
My friend is so jealous	I always get things wrong
I don't like myself	My granny died last week and I feel so sad

FOURTH LEVEL

My boyfriend / girlfriend has changed and I think they are going to dump me	I feel like giving up in Higher Maths
I am worried about leaving home	I don't know what I am going to do when I leave school
I can't cope with all the work in Fifth Year	I am worried that my mum and dad are going to split up
I feel ugly	My friends are leaving this year and I'll be on my own in school

POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS

do sport	laugh	tell a teacher
cry	go to bed early	listen to music
call a help line	make a plan/list	talk to friends
worry	ignore the problem	talk to someone at home
think positively	read a book	pretend everything is OK
tell yourself you can do it	practice mindfulness	keep trying
give it 100%	don't think about it	go for a walk
text your friend	get advice from the internet	put up with it

Lesson 4 – Optimism

My power playlist activity

Song title and Artist	Remedy Situation
'Happy' Pharrell Williams	This song always puts me in a good mood

Project Team

Xanthe Wylie, Psychological Service

Julie Tipping, Garnock Academy

Yvonne Hutchison, Psychological Service

For further information on change and loss, please contact your school Psychologist.

Educational Psychology Service, North Ayrshire Council,
6a Kilwinning Road, Irvine KA12 8RU Tel: 01294 272427



North Ayrshire Council
Comhairle Siorrachd Àir a Tuath

Tips for adults supporting children in NA establishments experiencing

Change and Loss

1 Take care of yourself and your colleagues

Be prepared to acknowledge your own feelings about change and loss should they emerge. At the end of a difficult day take time for yourself and others if they need it. You have a unique contribution to make in supporting and caring for children experiencing change and loss. Adults working in NA establishments:

- know the child and their personality
- often know the culture within the class
- teachers are experts in providing children with knowledge
- children trust teachers

2 Listen

A caring empathetic relationship is key for the child. Make eye contact with the child, sit near to them at their level, allow them to talk, nod in response to their words and acknowledge the situation “I can see that you are sad”.

3 Ask how the child is feeling

During check-ins ask “Are you doing OK today?” “If it helps to talk, you can always come and see me or another adult”.

4 Use clear language

“I am sorry that your granny died”. Avoid evasive terms like ‘she went to sleep’.

5 Normalise the child’s reaction

“The way you are feeling is normal, this has happened to other people too and this feeling will change”.



6 Let the child know they don't have to react as adults

"It's OK not to be sad all the time; it's OK to have fun".

7 Answer questions honestly

If a child asks a question to which you are not sure how to respond, ask them what they think about the issue.

Don't be afraid to say you don't know but you will try and find out for them.

"That's an interesting question, let me think about that and get back to you"
- gives you a chance to clarify your response.

8 Give the child permission to express how they feel

Use tools like 'I want to talk to you' cards or a worry box.

9 Consider how you are linking with parents

Good communication with home stimulates emotional coping. Help parents give adequate information, check what the family has told the child, check out where areas of difficulty lie and try to work out strategies with the child and their family to make school life easier.

10 Remember what you say can have a lasting effect on children

When the time is right, consider how to address change with the whole class. Education about change and loss supports resilience.

For further information on change and loss, please contact your school Psychologist. In the case of Child Protection, staff should discuss immediately with the establishment Child Protection co-ordinator.

Educational Psychology Service, North Ayrshire Council,
Cunninghame House, Irvine Tel: 01294 324500

Tips for Families supporting children experiencing Change and Loss

1 Acknowledge your own feelings about change and loss and take care of yourself

Do not hide your feelings. At the end of a difficult day, take time for yourself. It's OK that we are not always calm and consistent in everything we do. Pay attention to what you need and then do what you have the energy and resources to do. The most important thing is taking care of yourself and your children.

2 Listen

A caring empathetic relationship is key for your child. Make eye contact with them, sit near to them at their level, allow them to talk, nod in response to their words and acknowledge the situation.

"I can see that you are sad"

3 Ask how your child is feeling

"Are you doing OK today?"

4 Use clear language

"I am upset that granny has died."

"I miss your mum"

Avoid ambiguous terms like "she went to sleep", "we lost your granny" or "she left us".

5 Normalise your child's reaction

"The way you are feeling is normal, this has happened to other people too and this feeling will change".



6 Let your child know he/she doesn't have to react like the adults and try to accept whatever your child is feeling

“It's OK not to be sad all the time, it's OK to have fun.”

Accept children's play, it is normal for children to act out at times. Allow questions and conversations, look at photographs. Your child is more likely to share his/her emotions, thoughts, and concerns if he/she feels safe and accepted.

7 Answer questions honestly at the time when asked (where possible)

Your child may have lots of questions. If they ask a question to which you are not sure how to respond, ask them what they think about the issue.

Don't be afraid to say you don't know but will try and find out for them.

“That's an interesting question, let me think about it and get back to you” – gives you thinking time.

8 Remember children cope best when they feel included

If bereaved, experts suggest it is helpful and can help the grieving process if you let your child attend the funeral. Avoid unnecessary separations.

9 Consider how you are linking with the school

Good communication with school stimulates emotional coping. Check out with the school if any areas of difficulty have arisen and try to work out strategies with your child and the school to make school life easier.

10 Remember what you say can have a lasting effect on your child

Talk with your child about his/her worries; they can be worrying that something could happen to you or them. Talk with your child about potential guilt feelings.

For further information on change and loss, please ask your child's school for the change and loss leaflet and/or contact your school psychologist.

Educational Psychology Service, North Ayrshire Council,
Cunninghame House, Irvine Tel: 01294 324500

Produced by North Ayrshire Council's
Educational Psychology Service
in conjunction with North Ayrshire schools.



North Ayrshire Council
Comhairle Siorrachd Àir a Tuath

Bereavement Organisations

Touched by Suicide-Scotland (TBSS)

Tel: 01294 274 273

www.touchedbysuicidescotland.org

TBSS offer emotional & practical support in a number of ways. It is a self-help organisation who have been “touched by suicide” which exists to meet the needs and break the isolation of those bereaved by suicide.

Cruse Bereavement Care

Tel: 0845 600 2227

www.crusebereavementcare.org.uk

Cruse Bereavement Care promotes the well-being of bereaved people and enables anyone bereaved by death to understand their grief and cope with their loss.

This service is free of charge.

Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide (SOBS)

Tel: 0300 111 5065

www.uk-sobs.org.uk

SOBS exists to meet the needs & breaks the isolation experienced by people over 18 who have been bereaved by suicide.

Winstons Wish National Service

Tel: 08088 020 021

www.winstonswish.org.uk

Winston’s Wish offer practical support, information and guidance to all those caring for a child or young person who has been bereaved.

The Compassionate Friends (TCF)

Tel: 0345 123 2304

helpline@tcf.org.uk

www.tcf.org.uk

(TCF) is a charitable organisation of bereaved parents, siblings and grandparents dedicated to the support & care of other similarly bereaved family members who have suffered the death of a child or children of any age & from any cause.

Helplines

Breathing Space
National Service

Tel: 0800 83 85 87

Breathing Space support people who may experience difficulty and unhappiness, mental health problems and emotional distress.

The service is free of charge.

Samaritans

Tel: 08457 90 90 90
Text: 07725 90 90 90
jo@samaritans.org
www.samaritans.org

The Samaritans are a non-religious, confidential, emotional support service and will listen to anyone about anything that is worrying them.

The service requires that you pay for the telephone calls or you can attend at the branch for support for free.

Childline

Tel: 0800 1111
www.childline.org.uk

Childline is a private and confidential service for children and young people up to the age of 19.

You can contact a ChildLine counsellor about anything.

This service is free of charge.

NHS 24

Tel: 111
www.nhs24.com

NHS 24 is a telephone based self-help service for mild depression and anxiety provided by NHS24. This service is provided by trained coaches. Members of the public can self-refer and the service will accept referrals from primary care and secondary care.

General	
<p>SAMH National Service</p> <p>Tel: 0141 530 1000 www.samh.org.uk info@samh.org.uk</p>	<p>SAMH provides information and support for people across Scotland with mental health problems. They also have a community support network service from Monday – Friday for those supporting someone who is suicidal.</p>
<p>SAMH Positive Steps (NA) 21 Station Road Stevenston KA20 3NJ</p> <p>Tel: 01294 604384</p>	<p>SAMH Positive Steps engages with people to help access resources in their communities, working in a person centred way to achieve their own outcomes.</p> <p>Referral is via a GP, Primary Care Team, Community Mental Health Team or Care Manager.</p>
<p>Papyrus</p> <p>Hopeline UK – 0800 068 41 41 www.papyrus-uk.org/</p>	<p>Papyrus exist to reduce the number of young people who take their own lives by shattering the stigma around suicide & equipping young people & their communities with the skills to recognise & respond to suicidal behaviour.</p>
<p>Combat Stress Hollybush House Hollybush Ayr KA6 7EA</p> <p>Tel: 01292 561 300 www.combatstress.org.uk</p>	<p>Combat Stress is a leading veteran's mental health charity in the UK providing treatment for ex-Service personnel suffering with mental ill health including Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), anxiety and depression.</p>

Local Information	
<p>Service Access Team Various locations throughout North Ayrshire.</p> <p>Tel: 01294 310 000 Tel: 0800 811 505 (Out of Hours)</p>	<p>Service Access Team is the first point of contact for anyone who needs support from social work or mental health.</p>
<p>Welfare Rights</p> <p>Tel: 01294 310456</p>	<p>Welfare Rights aims to ensure that North Ayrshire residents are not missing out on their entitlement to benefits and other related help by providing a free, confidential and impartial benefits advice and information.</p> <p>This service is free of charge.</p>
<p>Citizens Advice</p> <p>Tel: 01294 467 848 http://nacasadvice.org.uk</p>	<p>Citizens Advice gives confidential and impartial advice, independent information and assistance on a wide range of subjects.</p> <p>This service is free of charge.</p>
<p>Café Solace Fullerton Connexions Church Street Irvine KA12 8PE or</p> <p>Church of Nazarene 150 Glasgow Street Ardrossan KA22 8EU</p>	<p>Café Solace is a café run by volunteers in recovery, all with appropriate training, experience and qualifications, who want to support their local community. It offers an ideal chance to find out important information about services and supports, about what's going on in North Ayrshire & how you might get involved.</p>

Step by Step

Information for students 

This guidance forms part of Samaritans' Step by Step resources for communities working with and supporting young people. Step by Step is a Samaritans service offering support, resources and practical advice for adults who work with young people and their communities, that have been impacted by an attempted or suspected suicide.

If you would like to find out more about this service:

 stepbystep@samaritans.org  0808 168 2528

SAMARITANS

Suicide is a tragedy. The loss of a life through suicide has a ripple effect on everyone that had a connection with the person who has died. It can affect the whole school community and beyond; even if the person who has died wasn't someone you knew very well.

Such a sad event can bring up a range of feelings and questions that you may never have experienced before. You may find it hard to explain how you are feeling to others or to ask for help. This leaflet will explain some of these feelings and what to do if you think you or one of your friends might need help.

This guidance forms part of Samaritans' Step by Step resources for communities working with and supporting young people. Step by Step is a Samaritans service offering support, resources and practical advice for adults who work with young people and their communities, that have been impacted by an attempted or suspected suicide.

If you would like to find out more about this service:

✉ stepbystep@samaritans.org 📞 0808 168 2528

Is how I'm feeling normal?

When there has been an event as traumatic as someone you know taking their own life, it can throw up all kinds of feelings. Everyone acts or reacts in their own way.

It's important to know that there's no right or wrong way of feeling.

How you may feel:

- ◉ Anger
- ◉ Betrayal
- ◉ Confusion
- ◉ Detached
- ◉ Disbelief
- ◉ Fear
- ◉ Guilt
- ◉ Hurt
- ◉ Isolation
- ◉ Numbness
- ◉ Shock
- ◉ Tearful

You may experience one or more of these emotions and that's ok. Feelings vary from person to person.

You may also have lots of questions. That's also common but often there are no clear answers or reasons. It may be that many of your questions cannot be answered.

It is important to express how you feel in a safe way. Talk to someone you can trust; someone who will listen and won't tell you how you should be feeling.

How can I help my friends?

If you are worried about how a friend is feeling, the best thing you can do is listen and be there for them. You may not know exactly what to say or do – most people don't.

You don't need to have ready answers or solutions. Being there for them and listening to them is often enough.

It's hard knowing that a friend is hurting, and you may find yourself struggling to cope.

Make sure that you have support yourself if you're trying to help a grieving friend. It can be very difficult if your friend changes from the person you know into someone who's expressing difficult, unusual or intense emotions.

Try to:

- give them time to cry when they need to
- listen without judging. Let them know you are there for them. They may go over the story time and time again. That's fine – it's part of the healing process
- remember that if they're showing anger it is because of the pain they're going through, not because of you.

There may be days when they seem fine and days when they don't. That's all part of coming to terms with what's happened. Suggest doing things that you know they enjoy. They might not feel ready, but it's important to make them feel included.

Even if they seem to have lots of family and close friends around, your friend might still need support. It's important that they know they can talk to you about their grief, so they don't feel alone with it.

If you think they need it, offer to help them get support by contacting a teacher, GP, school counsellor, bereavement specialist or talk to us at Samaritans.

Make sure you're supported too. Don't feel like you're carrying responsibility for their support all on your own shoulders. Helping someone come to terms with the loss of someone close to them isn't easy.

Can online memorials help?

It's important to remember that anything posted on social media sites can reach many people, very quickly.

It can be helpful to share memories of the person who has died and to send messages of support to others. However, please be aware that using social media comes with the risk of online rumours and unkind messages about the person who has died or their friends and family. Please tell your parents or school about any messages that concern you. You can ask for offensive messages to be removed by contacting the site.

You may be concerned about how someone else is coping because of their messages online. If so, tell someone you can trust and try to help them get the support they need.

Memorial pages should always be respectful and honour the person who has died. It's not helpful to post messages about how the person died or discuss the possible reasons why. This can be damaging and hurtful to the family and those who were close to the person who has died.

Why do people take their own lives?

Suicide is complex and often there isn't a single reason why someone takes their own life. Sometimes people get to a point where they are unable to see any other solutions to their problem. There are always solutions and people who will be there until you feel better. Problems are usually temporary but death is permanent, so it's a tragedy when someone is unable to reach out for help. Sadly, most people thinking about suicide don't really want to die but just want the pain they are feeling to stop.

When and how to seek help

It's important not to struggle with difficult emotions on your own. If your feelings become overwhelming or it's difficult to cope with small everyday events, find someone to talk to. No matter how awful things seem, there is always someone you can reach out to. Counsellors, family members, teachers or support staff can be of great help when you are feeling low. If you start having thoughts about suicide tell someone. It might feel scary and confusing but others can help you through this difficult time. You are not alone.

If you'd prefer to talk to someone in confidence who is not part of your school or family, you can contact Samaritans. We are there at any time of the day or night to help you. You can also contact us by email or text or by visiting one of our branches.

Talking can help

Everyone faces challenges in their lives and sometimes we all need someone to talk to, to help us cope. There is no shame in asking for help when you feel like coping on your own is too difficult. Samaritans know from experience how important it is that you feel able to talk about things that are troubling you. Be kind to your fellow students and teachers during this difficult time, as others will be hurting too.

Other things that can help:

- try and have a routine, meal times, getting up
- eat and sleep well
- do some physical exercise, walk or play a sport
- try and be outside for some time every day
- be with people you enjoy spending time with.

Further information

Breathing Spaces Scotland is a free, confidential phone and web-based service for people in Scotland experiencing low mood, depression or anxiety: www.breathingspacescotland.co.uk

Child Bereavement UK provides support to families grieving the loss of a child, and advice for professionals working with bereaved families: **01494 568900**, www.childbereavement.org.uk

ChildLine provides support services to children and young people: **0800 1111**, www.childline.org.uk

Samaritans are available round the clock, every single day of the year. We can help you talk through whatever is troubling you, find the answers that are right for you and offer support: **116 123** (this number is free to call), email jo@samaritans.org

Young Minds offers advice and support to parents worried about their children's emotional or mental wellbeing: **0808 8025544**, www.youngminds.org.uk

Someone to talk to – people contact us when things are getting to them. They don't have to be suicidal.

We're always here – round the clock, every single day of the year.

A safe place – as volunteers we're ordinary people, and keep all our conversations private.

People can be themselves – whoever they are, however they feel, whatever life's done to them.

We're a charity – it's the public's kind donations that help fund our service.

 [samaritans.org](https://www.samaritans.org)

SAMARITANS

Step by Step

Information for
parents and carers ←

This guidance forms part of Samaritans' Step by Step resources for communities working with and supporting young people. Step by Step is a Samaritans service offering support, resources and practical advice for adults who work with young people and their communities, that have been impacted by an attempted or suspected suicide.

If you would like to find out more about this service:

✉ stepbystep@samaritans.org ☎ 0808 168 2528

SAMARITANS

A suicide in a school is a very sad and traumatic event for students, staff, parents and the wider school community. This leaflet provides information to help you support the child in your care and help you understand your own feelings during this tough time.

Samaritans has many years experience of supporting people through difficult times. We hope that by sharing what we have learned with you, it may provide you with the knowledge and support you may need to help you and the child in your care cope with what has happened.

How do people respond to a suicide?

People cope with suicide in different ways and not all reactions are the same. It often leaves people asking “*why?*” or “*what could I have done?*” and coping with a wide range of difficult feelings including:

- ◉ Anger
- ◉ Disbelief
- ◉ Isolation
- ◉ Betrayal
- ◉ Fear
- ◉ Numbness
- ◉ Confusion
- ◉ Guilt
- ◉ Shock
- ◉ Detached
- ◉ Hurt
- ◉ Tearful

These feelings can sometimes be made worse by unhelpful responses by individuals, the community and the media.

However the child in your care is feeling, they need to be able to express their feelings in a safe way. Reassurance and attention are important. They will probably have many questions and they may find it difficult to understand what has happened.

Some young people may find it harder to cope than others. This is especially true for young people who have experienced other stressful situations in their lives. Talk to someone if you are worried about their reaction or behaviour.

How can I help the child in my care?

Listen carefully to what they say, and ask about how they feel.

Give them the time to talk about what has happened. They may want to ask you questions about what has happened and why. It is never easy to answer questions about why someone may wish to end their life. Suicide is complex and it is better to focus on remembering the person and not the way they died.

Details about the suicide should not be given to students, nor should you ask young people to give details, as this is potentially harmful.

Remind young people that talking about the details of the death can be upsetting and disrespectful to the family that has been bereaved and can lead to guessing and incorrect information. Focus on the things they would like to remember about the person who has died. Steer conversations to positive coping methods: talking about their feelings, supporting friends and building a stronger school community.

At this time the important messages to get across are:

- ◉ suicide takes away the possibility of things getting better
- ◉ there are always solutions and people who will be there to help until things get better
- ◉ pain is only temporary and that things will improve but death is permanent.

Try to be accepting and open-minded. Let your child know you are there for them, whatever the circumstances. Assure them that it's good to talk about how they feel, and that they have your support. Don't try and come up with reasons for a suicide or place the blame on anyone. Don't say anything that may suggest that suicide was a reasonable solution for that person eg "*it's probably for the best*" – this is of no comfort and can be harmful.

If necessary, offer to help them get support by contacting a teacher, GP, school counsellor, bereavement specialist or talking to us at Samaritans. Try not to take it personally if they are unwilling to talk to you about what has happened. That's not unusual and they may look to friends or mentors for support or simply carry on as normal. There are no right or wrong ways of coping. They just need to know they have support if and when they need it. Encourage them to seek help if they are worried about a friend.

Be aware of your own feelings. Be honest with yourself about how their reaction is affecting you. If you are struggling with your feelings, talk to us at Samaritans or seek other help.

Remember that there will be many people affected. Suicide has a ripple effect and impacts in different ways all the people that someone has been connected to. Everyone who has been affected by a suicide needs to be reassured that they are not alone and that help is available, should they need it.

There may be a funeral or a ceremony held to remember the deceased. The child in your care may or may not wish to attend and they may need an explanation of what to expect, or support after the event.

Be aware of the effects of the media. It may help to watch the news and read printed/online articles together so that you can talk about any concerns that are raised.

Sometimes parents are approached directly by journalists for comment – you are under no obligation to speak to them. If you do comment, it's important to remember not to go into detail about the suicide, and to focus on how everyone is feeling and how others can seek help if they need it. You can seek advice from the school affected.

Be aware of the online environment. The child in your care may wish to join or comment on online memorial pages. Remind them of the importance of expressing feelings in a safe way and supporting others, while being respectful to the school and the bereaved family.

Remember that although the school will be trying to keep school life as normal as possible, many people, including staff, will be managing difficult emotions. When talking to others, the best approach is to be respectful of the wishes of the bereaved family and follow the school's advice. Avoid glamorising or sharing details of the suicide, and always encourage others to seek help if they need it.

Why do people, including children and young people, take their lives?

There is often no single reason why people take their own lives. More often, it is due to a combination of circumstances which they feel powerless to change. Young people who take their own lives have often experienced difficulties that have built up over a long period of time, to the point where they can see no other way to stop the pain. In most cases, that can be changed with the right level of support.

Are there warning signs that someone is feeling suicidal?

It can be very difficult to tell if someone is suicidal, especially if they find it hard to talk about their feelings. People in crisis react in different ways. Nevertheless you may notice some behavioural changes, such as the individual becoming withdrawn or animated.

Signs that someone might be having suicidal thoughts and feelings include:

- giving away their belongings
- seeing no way to resolve their fears or anxieties
- becoming more isolated from friends and family
- unusual displays of anger or impatience towards friends and family
- being tearful for no obvious reason
- not being able to cope with small everyday events
- increased risk-taking
- using phrases such as *“what’s the point anymore?”*, *“I don’t want to wake up”*, *“they’d be better off without me”*.

If you are concerned about your child, encourage them to talk to someone. If someone is talking about having suicidal thoughts and feelings, always take it seriously. Supporting someone who is struggling to cope can be difficult. If you need to talk about how you are feeling, you can contact us at any time.

Where else can I go for support and information?

Breathing Space Scotland is a free, confidential phone and web-based service for people in Scotland experiencing low mood, depression or anxiety: www.breathingspace.scot

British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) can provide information about counsellors in your area: **0870 443 5252**, www.bacp.co.uk

Child Bereavement UK provides support to families grieving the loss of a child, and advice for professionals working with bereaved families: **01494 568900**, www.childbereavement.org.uk

ChildLine provides support services to children and young people: **0800 1111**, www.childline.org.uk

Cruse Bereavement Care promotes the wellbeing of bereaved people and enables anyone bereaved by death to understand their grief and cope with their loss. Provides support and offers information, advice, education and training services. www.cruse.org.uk / www.crusescotland.org.uk

Help is at Hand provides people affected by suicide with both emotional and practical support: www.supportaftersuicide.org.uk

Samaritans are available round the clock, every single day of the year. We can help you talk through whatever is troubling you, find the answers that are right for you and offer support: **116 123** (this number is free to call), email jo@samaritans.org

Winston's Wish provides practical support and guidance to bereaved children, young people and their families: **08452 030405**, www.winstonswish.org.uk

Young Minds offers advice and support to parents worried about their children's emotional or mental wellbeing: **0808 8025544**, www.youngminds.org.uk

Someone to talk to – people contact us when things are getting to them. They don't have to be suicidal.

We're always here – round the clock, every single day of the year.

A safe place – as volunteers we're ordinary people who give others the space to talk about what's troubling them.

People can be themselves – whoever they are, however they feel, whatever life's done to them.

We're a charity – it's the public's kind donations that help fund our service.

 [samaritans.org](https://www.samaritans.org)

SAMARITANS

The funeral

Providing children and young people with explanations and information about what will happen at the funeral can be helpful. Children need to have information that is clear, direct and concrete to help them make the right decision for themselves. When discussing the funeral with a child, it may be helpful to include the following:

- Where will the funeral take place?
- Who will be there?
- What will happen there?
- How long will it take?

Children can feel that they haven't had the opportunity to say goodbye if they are stopped from attending the funeral, however there are also children who feel resentful at being forced to attend. If a child makes the decision not to attend the funeral, they shouldn't be criticised for it. They may later regret their decision, but at least it was their decision to make and therefore no blame can be attributed to anyone else.

Be prepared for fears

Because of the sudden nature of a suicide children can worry that it will happen to others who they care about, or that they might be "destined" to die this way too. Listen to their fears and reassure them, you may need to do this more than once. To lessen confusion try to be consistent with your explanation about the death.

Inform the child's school

Sometimes children's behaviour can be affected by their grief and it is likely that their school life will also be affected. Informing the school will enable teachers to support a child if they are having difficulties, they can be excused from class without having to explain each time.



Mission Statement

We believe that we can make a difference in the lives of children who have been bereaved by supporting them through their grief using therapeutic play providing a safe haven for them to work out their feelings

227-229 Niddrie Mains Road, Edinburgh EH16 4PA

T 0131 661 6818

E info@richmondshope.org.uk

W www.richmondshope.org.uk

Funded by
City of Edinburgh Council, Midlothian Council,
The Robertson Trust And Others

Founded by
Jessie Douglas & Liz Henderson

Copyright © 2013 Richmond's Hope
All Rights Reserved

Scottish Charity No. SC036720 Company Limited by Guarantee 288400
Design by www.oneshoop.com

AFTER A SUICIDE

INFORMATION
FOR SUPPORTING
CHILDREN AND
YOUNG PEOPLE



Do you know someone who died by suicide?

If you do you are not alone. On average two people in Scotland die by suicide each day. They are mothers, fathers, siblings, grandparents and friends. Richmond's Hope has been supporting children and young people bereaved by suicide since 2003. This leaflet is to help you to support a child or young person who has been bereaved by suicide.

The truth

It is important to be honest with children. They don't necessarily need to know every detail about a death but they do need truthful answers and information. While we might think we are protecting children by pretending the suicide was an accident, children need to know the truth about a death to help them process the information. They may find out the truth, from other children, adults or news reports. If you are finding it hard to know what to say, think what you would say to a trusted friend. Telling the truth about a death can be hard, especially if the circumstances surrounding the death are unclear or difficult. If it is possible a parent is generally the most suitable person to tell their child about the death.

Talk openly about suicide

There is still stigma around suicide which can affect a family after the death. People still talk about "committing" suicide which comes from when suicide was considered a crime. Some people believe that suicide is a sin, or an act carried out by someone who is crazy. Using terms such as "died by suicide" can normalise how the person died and help aid understanding.

Why do some people choose to die by suicide?

No one knows why some people choose to die by suicide. Some may believe it is their only way out of what they feel is an impossible situation, some may have suffered from depression or an illness. Talking about them having a sickness in the brain could help a child understand why they couldn't see other ways to escape their particular situation. Some people choose to leave a note and others do not. If the child has a note left for them be prepared to support them through reading their note as the content could lead to more questions (if a note has been left and the police have taken it for evidence you are entitled to ask for a copy).

How to explain in more detail how the person died by suicide

Here are some explanations for the most frequent methods of suicide this may help you explain to a child how the person died.

- Hanging: Explain that the person used a rope to tie around their neck, and attached the other end to the place they chose to die. The rope pulled very tight and they stopped breathing; this is how they died.
- Drug overdose: Normally tablets and medicine from the doctor or the chemist are alright to take. When you follow the right instructions medicine can help to make you well when you are sick. If you take too many tablets or medicine it is hard for your body to cope, it poisons your body; this is how they died.

If the person has died by another method of suicide and you would like information on how to explain to a child/young person please contact us.

Viewing the body

Some choices can be more difficult to make than others. For example, many parents feel uncomfortable with the idea of a child viewing the body of the person who died, they feel that this may be too distressing for a child and want to protect them from further hurt. Children's imaginations can often be worse or more frightening than reality, and because children have a natural curiosity, viewing the body can help them understand that the person is dead.

It is important to use concrete words, like died or dead, as children can often become confused by other explanations. For example, a lot of people often use the term, "it looks just like they are asleep". Although this term seems kinder to use, children can often become confused and worried that when they, or someone else, go to sleep they too might not wake up.

Again, choice is important for a child. If a child decides they do not want to view the body, but everyone else in the family does, they should not be made to feel wrong. Children need permission to choose and reassurance that whatever they decide is alright. Again here is a list of facts that a child may find it helpful to talk about before viewing the body.

The Body:

- Is in an open or partially open coffin
- Is in a cool temperature
- Doesn't move
- Can't talk and doesn't see you
- Won't come back to life
- May be puffed up
- May have markings as a result of how they died
- Will look and feel different than the person did before the death
- May have a different smell

Meeting Venue's

Largs	The Woodhouse Hotel, 2 Barr Crescent, KA30 8PX 2ND Monday of the month 7pm-9pm
Glasgow North West	102 Kingsway, Scotstoun, Glasgow, G14 9YS 3rd Monday of the month 7pm - 9pm
Ayr	John Pollock Centre Main Holm Road KA8 0QD 1st Tuesday of the month 6.45-8.45pm
Glenrothes	Whitehouse Community Centre, South Parks House , Napier Road, Glenrothes, KY6 1AX 3rd Tuesday of the month 7-9pm
Whitburn	Whitburn Community Centre West Lothian EH47 8EZ Last Tuesday of the month 7pm- 9pm
Kilbirnie	Radio City 1a Bridgend Kilbirnie KA25 7DF 2nd Wednesday of the month 7pm-9pm
Airdrie	Four Isles Community Centre Varnsdorf Way, Airdrie ML6 8EQ 3rd Wednesday of the Month 7pm – 9pm
Girvan	Carrick Opportunity Centre, Henrietta St, KA26 9AL Last Wednesday of the month 7pm-9pm
Lanark	Lanark Lifestyles, Thomas Taylor Avenue Lanark ML11 7DG Last Wednesday of the month 7pm-9pm
Glasgow North East	East Bank Health Promotion Centre Academy Street Shettleston G32 1st Thursday of the Month 5.45pm – 7.45pm
Kilmarnock	Daniel Coffey Suite, North West Area Centre, Western Road, KA3 1NQ Last Thursday of the month 7pm- 9pm

Telephone Helpline Only

Contact: Linda 01294 274273

Service Provider: Information & Advice please contact Isabel Dunsmuir or James Shovelin c/o DRC Generations 0141 584 3211

Registered Office

Touched by Suicide Scotland

c/o 102 Kingsway Scotstoun

Glasgow G14 9YS 0141 584 3211

www.touchedbysuicidescotland.org

Supported by



**Foundation
Scotland**

“Touched By Suicide “

Scotland



The Parting

The day you decided to go
The pain you left you will never know
You are with the angels now
I will probably never know how
I wish there were more answers to see
Why all this should be
I think of you and wonder where you are
How near or how far
The hollowness lies cold and ahead of me
You are in eternity
Watch over me is all I ask
As I parade along, bearing my grim mask

Julia

Reflection

Another day for you to wonder, another day for you to mourn

*It wasn't my intention to go before the coming dawn
My pain was deep within my heart and troubled head
It wasn't my intention to go without words said.*

*My frame of mind seemed normal, or so I heard them say
It wasn't my intention not to see another day
I did not mean to make you suffer or cause you so much pain
It wasn't my intention to never see you again.*

*Despair and confusion left my aching mind unsure
It wasn't my intention to suddenly close life's door
If only I could give you reasons and brush the tears away
It wasn't my intention to leave and not stay.*

*I did not mean for you to grieve, now left alone to cry
It wasn't my intention to leave you, forever asking why
As the burdens of life's worries slowly ebb from my heart
It wasn't my intention to tear your soul apart.*

Y. Docherty

I Don't Know Why

*I don't know why.
I'll never know why.
I don't have to know why.
I don't like it.
I don't have to like it.*

*What I do have to do is to make a choice about my living.
The choice is mine.*

*I can go on living, valuing every moment in a way I never did before or I
can be destroyed by it and, in turn, destroy others.*

*I thought I was immortal, that my family and children were also.
That tragedy only happened to others.*

*But I know now that life is tenuous and valuable, so I am choosing to go
on living, making the most of the time I have, valuing my family and
friends in a way never possible before.*

Iris Bolton

Who Are We

We are a Self Help organisation, whom has been "Touched by Suicide", we exist to meet the needs and break the isolation of those bereaved by the suicide of a close relative or friend

What Do We Offer?

We offer emotional and practical support in a number of ways.....

Confidential telephone helpline
Support information
Help by e-mail
Group meetings
Network meetings
Information relating to practical issues and problems

Our Aims

We aim to provide a safe, confidential environment where bereaved people can share their experiences, express their feelings, giving and gaining support from and too each other.

We strive to improve public awareness and work with many other statutory and voluntary organisations.

Suicide recognises no age, social, ethnic or Cultural boundaries – Neither Do We

**AFTER
A SUICIDE...**



After a Suicide

This is dedicated to the memory of Jennifer Susan Ross, who took her own life on 4th February 2001, at the age of 23, after struggling with mental health problems for 11 years.

Introduction

Every day, around two people in Scotland die by suicide. For every one of those people, there are friends, partners, children, relatives, carers and colleagues left behind. This booklet is for all of them.

SAMH first produced After a Suicide in 2004, and it has helped many people since then. Funded by Choose Life, Scotland's national strategy and action plan to prevent suicide, this new edition has been fully revised and updated. It will help you with the practical issues that need to be faced after a suicide, talk about some of the emotions you might be experiencing and suggest some places where you can get help.

"The fact that there was the After a Suicide booklet was a huge relief to me. It never left my side in the early days. I encouraged my friends and family to read it and it helped them too! Knowing that this booklet was at hand meant that although I didn't know anyone else in the same situation as me, there were others out there who had gone through and were going through this experience. It made me feel less alone."

Jacqui

1. Practical Issues

- 03 The Police
- 04 The Procurator Fiscal
- 04 Post mortems
- 05 Releasing the body for burial/cremation
- 06 Communications with the Procurator Fiscal
- 06 Fatal Accident Inquiries
- 07 Registering the death
- 09 The funeral
- 10 Funeral payments from the Social Fund
- 12 Letting others know
- 13 Media interest
- 14 Money and possessions
- 15 Benefits and allowances
- 16 Other investigations and inquiries
- 16 The NHS
- 17 The Mental Welfare Commission

2. The Grieving Process

- 18 Immediate responses
- 19 The big question: why?
- 19 Stigma and shame
- 20 Children affected by suicide
- 23 Your emotions
- 23 Guilt
- 23 Anger
- 24 Confusion and helplessness
- 24 Isolation
- 24 Coping strategies
- 26 Moving forward

3. Useful contacts and resources

- 27 Mental health information
- 27 Support
- 29 Scottish Government initiatives
- 29 Legal advice
- 29 Welfare benefits
- 30 Other advice
- 31 Helpful books
- 32 Acknowledgements

Part 1. Practical issues

Following any death, there will inevitably be practical issues to deal with. This section sets out some of the organisations you might now come into contact with, explains what their roles are and covers some other issues that you might need to know about.

The Police

When a body is found under circumstances which may indicate suicide, the police will:

- retain any item that has an obvious connection with the death
- record the position and appearance of the body in writing and by taking photographs
- examine any notes or letters that the person has left which indicate a suicidal intention
- make enquiries to establish the person's state of mind before their death

The deceased person's body will be taken to the local mortuary.

Police enquiries can take many different forms and often involve interviewing family, friends and colleagues as potential witnesses. Police officers often have to inform people of the death of a relative and should carry out this duty professionally and sensitively. As a next-of-kin or someone close to the deceased person, you may be asked to formally identify the person. This may be done immediately if you have found the person, or you may have to go to the mortuary later and do this.

A police report to the Procurator Fiscal should also include information about any cultural or religious issues that may be relevant to the investigation into the death and sensitive liaison with bereaved relatives.

The Procurator Fiscal

The Procurator Fiscal (referred to here as the Fiscal) is a lawyer who works for Scotland's prosecution service. The Fiscal is responsible for investigating all sudden, suspicious, accidental and unexplained deaths and any death occurring in circumstances which give rise to serious public concern. The Fiscal must enquire into any death where the circumstances point to suicide. The Fiscal has legal responsibility for the deceased person until the death certificate is issued and the deceased person is released to the person arranging the funeral.

The Fiscal will investigate the cause and circumstances and will then decide whether any further investigation is needed. This may involve instructing a post mortem, to be carried out by a forensic pathologist. The Fiscal is responsible for directing the level and type of post mortem examination, subject to advice from investigating police officers, medical experts and other expert advisers.

The purpose of the Fiscal's investigation is to decide whether there is a need for criminal proceedings or if a Fatal Accident Inquiry should be held (see page 6 of this booklet for more information on Fatal Accident Inquiries). This decision may depend on the results of toxicological examinations.

Post mortems

There are different levels of post mortem depending on the circumstances of the death:

- a non invasive external post mortem examination by one pathologist
- an invasive post mortem examination by one pathologist
- an invasive post mortem examination by two pathologists or more

After the post mortem, you will be given the medical certificate showing the initial cause of death which you will require to take with you to register the death (see page 7 of this guide for information on how to register a death). If toxicology or other tests have been taken at the time

of the post mortem (for example, blood or urine) it may take some time for the results of these tests to become known.

Should the outcome of these tests amend the cause of death, you will be advised of any amendment to the cause of death by the Procurator Fiscal. You will also receive a letter from the National Records of Scotland in due course to advise you when the amended death certificate is available for you to collect from the local registrar.

Post mortems do not usually leave any obvious marks when the person is placed in their coffin. They can usually still be dressed in their own clothes and seen after the post mortem. If there are any cultural, religious or other objections to a post mortem examination it is important to tell the Fiscal as soon as possible. There may be legal reasons why a post mortem is unavoidable, but where possible the wishes of the next of kin will be respected.

Releasing the body for burial/cremation

The Fiscal is responsible for instructing the release of the deceased person's body for burial or cremation. The extent of the investigations will determine how long the deceased person's body needs to be kept before being released. In deaths where there are no grounds to suspect that a homicide has been committed, the Fiscal must ensure that there are arrangements in place for the deceased's body to be released to the nearest relative as soon as possible.

The Fiscal recognises that a delay in confirming the cause of death can be very distressing for a bereaved family and is also aware that it is a tradition in many cultures to bury or cremate the deceased's body as quickly as possible.

Once the Fiscal has received all the information needed he/she will assess the circumstances of a death by suicide. In most cases there will be no further proceedings by the Fiscal following a death report being received from the police. However in a very small number of suicide cases, the

circumstances of the death may require the Fiscal to report the death to Crown Office (the headquarters of the Procurator Fiscal Service), for a decision to be made as to whether a Fatal Accident Inquiry should be held. All suicides which occur whilst a person was in legal custody will however require a Fatal Accident Inquiry to be held.

Communications with the Procurator Fiscal

Regardless of whether there is to be a Fatal Accident Inquiry, the Fiscal should normally contact the nearest relatives at the earliest opportunity and may offer a meeting to discuss matters. The Fiscal will ensure that families are updated on any developments in the investigation. The nearest relatives will be informed about the decision to hold, or not hold, a Fatal Accident Inquiry. If there is to be a Fatal Accident Inquiry, and you, as the nearest relatives, want to raise any issues, you may wish to contact a solicitor for advice. The nearest relatives are entitled to be represented at a Fatal Accident Inquiry, and can lead evidence and question witnesses.

Fatal Accident Inquiries

A Fatal Accident Inquiry (FAI) is a public inquiry into the circumstances of a death. It will be held in the Sheriff Court. Generally speaking, an FAI will only be held in cases that involve issues of public safety or public concern arising from the death. If the death happened as a result of an accident, whilst a person was working or when a person was in legal custody (e.g. in prison or police custody) a Fatal Accident Inquiry must be held.

The purpose of an FAI is to assess the circumstances surrounding the death and to identify any issues of public concern or safety. The Court will identify whether anything might be done to help avoid similar deaths in the future. At the end of an FAI, a Sheriff makes a determination. The determination will set out:

- where and when the death occurred
- the cause of death
- any precautions by which the death might have been avoided
- any defect in systems that caused or contributed to the death.

An FAI cannot make any findings of fault or blame against individuals.

Registering the death

The National Records of Scotland (NRS) keeps records of all births, deaths, marriages, divorces and adoptions. Any death which occurs in Scotland must be registered within eight days by the Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages. Deaths can be registered at any registrar's office. You should be able to find out the contact details of the local registrar from the police, undertaker, hospital, doctor, local telephone book, or find more information on registering the death on their website: <http://www.gro-scotland.gov.uk>.

You should phone the registrar before you go, as many registrars require people to make appointments to register deaths. Although a burial can take place before the death has been registered, a cremation can only take place afterwards.

The death can be registered by any of the following people:

- any relative of the deceased person
- any person who was present when the death occurred
- the deceased person's executor or legal representative
- the occupier of the property where the person died
- any other person who knows the information to be registered.

If you are registering the death, you should try to take with you:

- the medical certificate showing cause of death
- the deceased person's birth certificate and, if relevant, marriage certificate
- the deceased person's NHS medical card
- any documents relating to the receipt of a pension or allowance from government funds.

Don't worry if you don't have all of these documents, as the death can still be registered without them. After you have registered the death, the registrar will give you:

- a certificate of registration to give to the person in charge of the burial ground or crematorium
- a Social Security registration or notification of death certificate for use in obtaining or adjusting Social Security benefits
- an abbreviated extract of the death entry (excluding cause of death and parentage details)

You may wish to buy some extra copies of the extract as they will often be required by banks and other organisations when you notify them of the death. If you want a copy of the full death entry in the register, you will need to pay a small fee.

If a person who normally lived in Scotland died abroad, their death will have to be registered according to local regulations, and a certificate of death obtained. The local police, British Consul or tour guide can advise you on how to do this. You can also often register the death at the British Consulate as well, for a fee. You don't have to do this, but if you do you can buy a UK-style death certificate, and the record will be sent to the General Register Office Scotland within 12 months. You can then ask the Registrar for a copy by contacting the General Register Office at: New Register House, Edinburgh, EH1 3YT (tel: 0131 334 0380). You can also use the contact form

available at the General Register Office for Scotland website:
<http://www.gro-scotland.gov.uk>

If the person who died was a serving member of the British armed forces, their commanding officer can also request a copy of the record.

The funeral

Funerals can be expensive and the costs will depend on the requirements. Services can vary greatly, taking account of different cultures, religions and beliefs. It is best to check where the money for the funeral will come from before finalising the arrangements; otherwise you may find that you have to cover the cost. In some cases, the funeral expenses will be covered entirely by the person's estate. In other cases, depending on the circumstances, help may be available to cover the costs (see the next section for further details).

You do not have to use the services of a funeral director but most people find it easier to have someone else make the arrangements on their behalf. You can ask the funeral director to explain the costs, give you a written estimate and explain whether you have to pay the costs before or after the funeral. The total cost will cover services such as laying out the body, use of the chapel of rest and hearse, and purchasing the coffin. It will also include any expenditure that the funeral director makes on your behalf such as inserting notices in newspapers and obtaining official documents.

Funeral payments from the Social Fund

You may be able to get help towards the cost of a funeral from the Social Fund, depending on your relationship with the person who died and any other money, other than your personal savings, that may be available to help with the costs. You can apply for a Funeral Payment if you or your partner get any of the following benefits or tax credits:

- Income Support
- income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Pension Credit
- Housing Benefit
- Council Tax Benefit (or the Council Tax payer where you live gets a Second Adult Rebate because you are on a low income)
- Working Tax Credit which includes a disability or severe disability element
- Child Tax Credit at a rate higher than the family element.

To be able to get a Funeral Payment you must also be either:

- the partner of the deceased when they died
- the parent of the deceased child, or have been responsible for the deceased child (and there is no absent parent) (unless they are getting one of the above qualifying benefits or were estranged from the child at the date of death)
- the parent of a still-born child
- a close relative or close friend of the deceased (and it is reasonable for you to accept responsibility for the funeral costs)

You can claim a Funeral Payment from the date of death and up to three months after the date of the funeral. If you are waiting for a decision on a qualifying benefit or entitlement you must still claim within this time period. To apply for a Funeral Payment contact your local Jobcentre Plus office and ask for a Funeral Payment from the Social Fund Form (SF200). There is an information guide on the Funeral Payment scheme available to download from the DirectGov website (www.direct.gov.uk) and the application form for Funeral Payments (SF200) can also be downloaded from this website.

You will need to show a copy of the final invoice from the funeral director, showing a breakdown of the total costs. A Funeral Payment includes necessary burial or cremation fees, certain other specified expenses and up to £700 for any other funeral expenses, such as the funeral director's fees, the coffin or flowers. For your claim to be successful, it must have been reasonable for you rather than anyone else to take responsibility for the cost of the funeral. If there are any other funds available to pay for the funeral, this may affect your claim.

(Please note that all information relating to Funeral Payments were correct at time of writing and changes to legislation and benefits may mean that this information is no longer current)

Letting others know

As well as family, friends and carers, there are likely to be other people who should be informed of the death. A solicitor might be able to help you notify banks, creditors or other organisations. The following list might help you in deciding who you need to notify:

- GP and/or hospital
- other health professionals like dentists, community psychiatric nurse or optician
- the person's employer (you may need to arrange to collect the person's belongings or notify staff of the funeral date)
- the person's pension company
- the person's insurance company
- the person's bank
- the person's mortgage provider or housing association
- the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency
- the Passport Office
- a car insurance company (if you are insured under the deceased person's name, your insurance will become invalid)
- gas, electricity and telephone companies
- the Post Office so they can redirect the person's mail
- email providers, like Gmail or Hotmail (most accounts will be automatically closed if they are not used for a certain period)
- online networks like Facebook or Twitter

You might find it helpful to register online at The Bereavement Register (www.the-bereavement-register.org.uk). This is a free service which can help to cut down the amount of unsolicited mail that is sent to a deceased person. Local authorities are now offering a service called 'Tell Us Once' that allows someone to inform the Government just once about a death and this information will then be shared with the appropriate services and departments on your behalf. When you register the death at your local registrar's office, you can ask if this service is available and if so, many of the above departments and services can be notified on your behalf. There is more information on 'Tell Us Once', including checking whether this service

is available in your area on the DirectGov website (www.direct.gov.uk)

If this service is not available in your local authority, the Department of Work and Pensions has a Bereavement Service available via telephone who can take the details of the death, provide advice on benefits and funeral payments and help with ending benefits for someone who has died. They can be contacted on 0845 606 0265, Monday to Friday 8am to 8pm.

Media interest

Sometimes the media might take an interest in a death by suicide. Your funeral director or the police might be able to help deal with any media attention. The police might provide you with a Family Liaison Officer who you can speak to about this. It is best to check the identity of anyone who phones or comes to your door before telling them anything.

If you are asked to release a picture of the person to the press, consider this carefully before you do so: the picture could subsequently appear in other publications and on the internet, which you may find distressing.

Journalists are encouraged to report on any suicide in a sensitive and appropriate manner. For more information, you might find it useful to read the National Union of Journalists' media guidelines on reporting suicide: <http://www.nujscotland.org.uk>. The Samaritans also have media guidelines which give guidelines on how suicide should be reported sensitively across all media; these are available at www.samaritans.org/media_centre.

Money and possessions

If the deceased person has left savings, property and/or debts, then someone will need to deal with these. It is best to try and gather together all of the relevant paperwork such as:

- any will
- bank or building society books or documents
- insurance documents
- benefit order books
- mortgage statements or rent book
- savings certificates
- credit card or loan statements
- utility bills (gas, electricity, telephone).

It is also best to seek advice as soon as possible from a solicitor or advice centre. Legal costs vary depending on how much work is involved in winding up the estate. Legal Aid may be available for the costs of winding up an estate. You may also be able to get Legal Aid to cover the costs of going to court to be appointed as the executor of the will. You should not dispose of any property until you have sought legal advice. If the person has not left a will, then there are rules about how the estate should be divided among surviving relatives. Funeral expenses take priority over any other debts on the person's estate.

Benefits and allowances

If you are a widow or widower as a result of the death, then you may be entitled to receive:

- Bereavement payment – a one-off, tax-free lump sum payment of £2000 paid to the husband, wife or civil partner of someone who has died
- Widowed parent's allowance – a weekly payment made to a parent whose husband, wife or civil partner has died who has a dependent child or young person (aged 16 and under 20) and for whom they receive Child Benefit
- Bereavement allowance – a taxable weekly benefit paid to a widow, widower or civil partner for 52 weeks from the date of death

There are rules and conditions about eligibility for these, more information is available at the DirectGov website (www.direct.gov.uk) and the pack to apply for these benefits can be downloaded from the section on 'What to do after a death'. You can get advice on eligibility from your local Jobcentre Plus Office, Citizens Advice Bureau or welfare rights adviser (see 'useful contacts and resources' section) to find out if you are entitled to any payment.

If the deceased person was receiving any benefits, or if you were receiving welfare benefits for them (such as Child Benefit), you will need to notify Jobcentre Plus of the death. You should also notify the Tax Office. If you use The Bereavement Register (www.the-bereavement-register.org.uk) service or call the Department of Work and Pensions Bereavement service on 0845 606 0265 then this shouldn't be necessary. There is more information on this service on Page 12 of this booklet).

Other investigations and inquiries

There are several different organisations besides the police and Fiscal which might be involved in investigating the circumstances surrounding a suicide. The type of inquiries that may be carried out will depend very much on a person's circumstances at the time of, and leading up to, their death. As a result, **some of this section may not be relevant in your own case.**

You may not always be told that an inquiry is taking place, or given copies of reports that are produced.

The NHS

NHS Boards usually carry out some form of review in any case where someone who has been receiving treatment, either as an in-patient or as an out-patient, has died and suicide is the most likely cause. These reviews are usually referred to as critical incident reviews or suicide reviews. The main aim of these reviews is to look at the care and treatment the person was receiving prior to his or her death and to see if any lessons can be learned in order to help reduce the risk of future suicides. These reviews are not fault finding investigations.

At the moment, there is considerable variation in the way that NHS Boards deal with reviews. Healthcare Improvement Scotland (www.healthcareimprovementscotland.org) has developed a Scotland Suicide Reporting System promote good practice advice for NHS Boards undertaking suicide/critical incident reviews and help ensure that lessons learnt can be shared throughout the NHS in Scotland to improve services for those at risk. You can contact the Suicide Reporting Team for more information and advice at hcis.SuicideReviewTeam@nhs.net or on 0131 623 4281.

The clinical staff involved in the care of someone who has died by suicide will usually speak with the relatives and close carers of the person concerned. It is usually very helpful to the suicide review to have information from relatives who were in close contact with the person who has died.

Healthcare Improvement Scotland may refer individual cases to the Mental Welfare Commission if it believes further investigation should be considered.

The Mental Welfare Commission

The Mental Welfare Commission for Scotland (MWC) is an independent organisation set up by Parliament. It works to safeguard the rights and welfare of people with mental disorder. ('Mental disorder' covers mental illness, personality disorder, learning disability and dementia.) More information is available from their website: www.mwcscot.org.uk

The MWC will not routinely look into the care and treatment of people who die by suicide. They can investigate if there appears to be any abuse, neglect or "deficiency of care". Sometimes, the MWC investigates a death by suicide if they think the care might have been poor. The MWC will not investigate if there is to be an FAI.

Part 2. The Grieving Process

What follows is an attempt to outline some common reactions to losing someone to suicide. You might recognise some of them, or you might find that your reactions are totally different. Everyone grieves differently: there is no correct response.

You may feel low and unable to cope. You might find it very difficult to sleep, eat or feel motivated to do anything. You may even have suicidal thoughts yourself. If you do, it is important that you speak to someone about it.

Talk to someone you trust or phone Breathing Space on 0800 83 85 87 or Samaritans on 116 123. **If you are having serious thoughts about suicide, and you have a plan and the means to carry it out: call 999 right now.**

Immediate responses

Nothing can truly prepare you for the news that someone you love or care for has taken their own life. Whether someone else broke the news to you, or you had the uniquely traumatic experience of discovering the body, shock and disbelief are often the immediate responses to suicide. The emotions that you experience can be powerful, frightening and overwhelming.

You may feel that the person's death has come out of the blue with no warning. Even in cases where someone has previously told you that they were feeling depressed, or had made suicide attempts before, their death may still come as a shock.

In other cases, people may feel that they had 'seen it coming' but been powerless to prevent it. You might have had a loved one go missing and known in your heart that they would not be coming back. The manner of death may be particularly hard for you to accept. Whatever the circumstances, finding out about a suicide is a deeply painful experience..

The big question – why?

One of the first things that you might ask yourself, or others might ask you, is "Why did they do it?". Even if the person left a note, it might not give you all the answers. Notes are generally written at a time when the person was extremely distressed and they may not properly express how the person was feeling at the time. It can be very hard to accept, but you will probably never know for sure.

Stigma and shame

You may find yourself wondering what to tell people – should you say that the cause of death was suicide? Some people find it helpful to be open about this, for example at the funeral, but it can be a difficult decision. Sadly, there is still an element of stigma which surrounds suicide and mental health problems. This can lead to misunderstanding and unhelpful attitudes in others, which can make things even more difficult for people affected by the death. Many people simply do not know much about suicide, although it is a major public health issue. For example, many people are unaware that suicide is a leading cause of death in Scotland. There are initiatives ongoing in Scotland to try to tackle this issue, such as the 'see me' anti-stigma campaign which SAMH manages. To learn more about the 'see me' campaign go to www.seemescotland.org.

Ultimately, only you can decide what to tell people. You may wish to tell only the people closest to you, and others who 'need to know'. Or you may decide to tell anyone who asks. Bear in mind that sometimes people will speculate about what happened and it is not always possible to keep things hidden.

Although you will probably find that most people will be supportive, you may be disappointed by the way that others react. Some people may be afraid or feel helpless; they might not know what to say to you or be worried that they will upset you, or they might avoid talking about it at all. Try to accept that this might happen and focus on coping with your own feelings without dwelling on what others think or say.

“Before Darryn died, the phone never stopped ringing, but afterwards it was the opposite. People who I thought were friends cut contact and said things that made me feel as if I was being judged as a parent. They didn’t realise that their comments were really, really hurtful. I felt rejected and isolated which made me retreat for a period of time. But online support groups and organisations made me realise that I wasn’t alone and that the feelings I was having were normal.” **Caroline**

Children affected by suicide

Depending on the circumstances, and the age and maturity of children affected by suicide, it is often best simply to be truthful about what happened and how it is affecting you, without going into too much detail. Avoid using phrases like ‘gone to sleep’ or ‘gone to a better place’, as this can be confusing for them. Children should be encouraged to talk about their feelings and not to bottle things up. Reading stories and drawing can help children express emotions and understand some difficult issues. Children who experience loss and grief can act differently from adults and may communicate their feelings in lots of ways.

The UK childhood bereavement charity Winston’s Wish have created some guidelines on supporting a child when someone they care about has died by suicide. They recommend five steps when talking to a child about a death by suicide. These steps can take place over the course of minutes, hours, weeks or even years depending on the age of your child and their understanding of the situation.

There is no one set way to have this conversation and it will take time and care. It can be helpful to give the child a chance to say how they are feeling and allow you to respond to their need for information at different times. The five steps are as follows:

Stage 1 – explaining that the person has died

This is the stage where you gently and simply say that someone has died
“I have something really sad to tell you. Mum died today”

Stage 2 – giving simple details about how they have died

This is an opportunity to explain in general how the person died. It allows you to tell part of the story honestly but without having to give details which you feel might be too much at this time. Remember to check with the child what they have understood and if they have questions or want more information.

Stage 3 – saying that the person chose to take their own life

At this stage you will need to explain that the person has killed themselves. The explanation will be different in each situation because each suicide is individual but explaining that the person has chosen to end their life is important. After your explanation, you might also want to check again if the child has understood what you have said and if they have any questions.

Stage 4 – providing a more detailed description of how the person died

This is the stage where you need to explain the method of suicide. This is probably the part people are most worried about but if the child is told gently, simply and factually it can help them to better understand what has happened. It is important the child feels informed by what you have told them but not too frightened. They should also be able to ask you for any more information if they need it.

Stage 5 – explaining possible reasons why the person has killed themselves

Most family members will ask the question ‘Why’ and will wonder why they didn’t see things were so wrong or whether they could have done more to prevent the person from dying by suicide. If you know some of the reasons why the person has taken their own life it might be helpful to share these with your child. It will be important that the child knows that nothing they have done or said (or have not done and said) made this happen.

If it is appropriate you might want to reassure the child at this time that the person who has died loved them and cared about them very much. Conversations like these will be emotional and difficult for everyone but afterwards you may feel relieved that you have been able to be honest with your child and know that they can trust you if they have difficult questions to ask later.

More information on this process and advice on your own situation are available from the Winston's Wish helpline (see the Useful Contacts section later in this booklet).

Children are likely to need reassurance that they are not to blame in any way for the death, that people still love and care for them, and that it doesn't mean that other people in their life will die unexpectedly. If it is too difficult for you to support or reassure children while you are grieving, try to get other people to help you. Let the school or any groups the child is part of know what has happened, so that they can be supportive.

"I played the game of Jenga with my young daughter to help her understand what happened when her father died. We built a tower of wooden blocks, and slowly, as we recognised a difficulty for her daddy, we pulled a block out and placed it on top of the tower. After these difficulties began to pile up, the tower became unsteady and eventually tumbled. This showed her that there was never just one event that caused her daddy to take his own life, but that there were a number of unresolved issues and pressures which finally became unbearable for him." **Teresa**

Your emotions

Experiencing bereavement by suicide will mean dealing with sometimes conflicting emotions, such as:

Guilt

You may feel that you should have seen it coming and that you should have done something to prevent the person's suicide, or perhaps that something you did or said was partly to blame. This is a very common reaction, but no matter what happened, **it is not your fault**. People may go to great lengths to hide their thoughts of suicide from their loved ones. Even if you suspected that the person was deeply depressed, it is often extremely difficult to convince people to get help, or to get help on their behalf.

The reality is that you did what you thought was best at the time and that is all that can be expected of you. You cannot take complete responsibility for anyone else's life. Nor can you know exactly how someone is thinking or feeling.

Perhaps you feel guilty because you may feel partly relieved that the person has gone and that you don't have to worry about them anymore. This is another common reaction, particularly when you have spent a long time caring for, and worrying about, someone who has been very unwell.

Anger

The fact that someone has 'chosen' to end their life may make you feel very angry. You may ask yourself, 'How could they do this to me/us?'. You might want someone to direct your feelings towards or to blame. This may be the person you have lost, or it may be others who were involved with them. Coping with anger can be very difficult and you may need the help of others to work through this (see 'Coping strategies' later in this section).

Confusion and helplessness

You may feel very confused and unable to concentrate. It can be very hard to make decisions when you are struggling to get through days which may be filled with exhausting and overwhelming emotions. Some people talk of a sense of helplessness – that things are completely out of their control, and that they don't know how to help others who are also grieving.

Isolation

You might feel that no-one understands what you are going through and that you are on your own. People react differently to loss, even within close families. Some people may cope by talking about their feelings, while others may prefer not to talk about things and feel that what they need is to 'put it behind them and get on with life'. This may lead to disagreements. It is worth recognising that although some people may not want to talk about their loss initially, this may change as time goes on.

Everyone grieves in different ways and at different times. Triggers that can set off tears and immense feelings of sadness for one person will not necessarily do the same for another. This does not mean they don't care: it just means that they are grieving differently.

Coping strategies

Not all of these suggestions will work for you, but these are some things that people who have lost someone to suicide have found helpful.

It is essential that you do not feel that you have to cope alone. You might turn to family or friends, or you may find other sources of comfort, such as spiritual beliefs. In some cases, you may find it easier to speak to people out with your family or friends. The last section of this booklet gives details of organisations that provide bereavement counselling or local support groups: your GP can also refer you to a counsellor.

Support groups offer you the opportunity to meet other people who have been bereaved and to talk through your feelings in a supportive environment. There are some groups in Scotland specifically for people who have been bereaved as a result of suicide: see the 'Useful contacts and resources' section at the end of this booklet.

"When the police came to tell me my son was dead I thought I would die. How can you describe the feeling of loss? The anger, years of trying to get the right help and support then all of a sudden it was too late. I was lucky I had great family and friends who supported and encouraged me through the first months, which was just as well as there wasn't much support from anywhere else. I do hope things have changed over the years. Doing something, getting together with other people, finding ways of helping others are all great healers. We don't need to do earth shattering things to make a difference, and that's how I got over my grief." Isabel

Many employers offer Employee Assistance Programmes, which can arrange telephone or face-to-face access to counselling: if you are working, it may be worth asking your manager or HR department whether this is available.

Some people might find it helpful to read self-help books or poetry, perhaps written by others who have had a similar experience (see 'Helpful books' section at the end of this booklet). Others may find an outlet for their emotions by writing about how they feel or keeping a diary.

Bereavement can affect your health, physically and mentally. It is important to take care of yourself – try to eat a balanced diet, get sleep and rest. You might be tempted to use alcohol or other substances to numb your feelings, but this is not a solution, and may well make things worse.

When you are ready, it can help to commit some time to try and focus on things which help to take your mind off your bereavement, such as hobbies

or sporting and leisure activities like swimming, cycling or running. Perhaps you could try something new, like meditation or yoga, which might help you to relax.

Some people find it helpful to set up a web page that can be dedicated to the person who has died. It enables friends/family to have input and can often help with the healing process. One such company is www.gonetoosoon.org but there are many others.

Moving Forward

Inevitably, there will be difficult times such as the anniversary of the death, birthdays or family events. It might help to plan ahead for these times. It might help to talk through your feelings with someone, or do something in remembrance on significant days like visiting a place that has a special memory or planting a shrub or flower. Sometimes, the anticipation of the event can be worse than the actual day itself.

You will undoubtedly hear clichés like ‘time is a great healer’. Although you may not initially accept this, most people find that as they work through their emotions, it becomes easier to adjust to living with their loss. For every person who has died as a result of suicide, there are many others who have somehow survived losing them. Learning to accept that the person has gone doesn’t mean you are forgetting that they played an important role in your life, and that they always will.

“It’s really good to be able to get together with other people and talk about the people you’ve lost and what they meant to you, and to celebrate their lives. It is by having such contacts now that I feel able to get that information out to others who may be in that same place of despair and isolation.” **Caroline**

Part 3. Useful contacts and resources

Mental health information

If you have any queries or comments about this booklet or would like information or advice about mental health issues, please contact:

SAMH:

By phone: 0141 530 1000

By email: info@samh.org.uk

By post: Brunswick House, 51 Wilson Street, Glasgow, G1 1UZ

Website: www.samh.org.uk

For information or advice about depression, contact:

Action on Depression:

By phone: 0808 802 2020

By email: info@actionondepression.org.uk

By post: ‘Thorn House’, 5 Rose Street, Edinburgh, EH2 4PH.

Website: www.actionondepression.org.uk

Support

Breathing Space is a free and confidential phone line service for anyone who is experiencing low mood, anxiety or depression, or who is in need of someone to talk to or unusually worried. Contact Breathing Space:

By phone: 0800 83 85 87

(Mon-Thurs 6pm-2am,
Fri 6pm-Mon 6am)

Website: www.breathingspacescotland.co.uk

Samaritans provide confidential emotional support 24 hours a day, 365 days a year for people who are feeling distressed or need to talk to someone. You can contact them:

By phone: 116 123

By email: jo@samaritans.org

By post: Chris, PO Box 90 90,
Stirling FK8 2SA

Website: www.samaritans.org.uk

Childline is a free 24 hour helpline. Children and young people can call and talk to a Childline counsellor about any problem, including coping with bereavement. You can contact them:

By phone: 0800 11 11

Website: www.childline.org

Child Bereavement Charity works with families and children when a child dies or experiences bereavement

By phone: 0800 02 888 40

By email:

support@childbereavement.org.uk

By post: The Saunderton Estate, Wycombe Road, Saunderton, Buckinghamshire, HP14 4BF

Website: www.childbereavement.org.uk

Winston's Wish works with children who have been bereaved. Contact them:

By phone: 08452 03 04 05

By email: info@winstonswish.org.uk

By post: Westmoreland House, 80-86 Bath Road, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire GL53 7JT

Website: www.winstonswish.org.uk

Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide

offers emotional and practical support to people bereaved by suicide. You can contact them:

By phone: 0844 561 6855 (9am-9pm)

By post: The Flamsteed Centre, Albert Street, Ilkeston, Derbyshire DE7 6GU

Website: www.uk-sobs.org.uk

PAPYRUS is a national UK charity dedicated to the prevention of youth suicide. Their helpline HOPELineUK

offers practical advice, information and non-judgemental support from trained professionals to children, teenagers and anyone up to the age of 35 who is worried about themselves or who is concerned about a young person they know who may be at risk of suicide. Contact them:

By phone: 0800 068 4141

(Mon-Fri 10am-5pm, 7pm-10pm; Sat-Sun 2pm-5pm)

Website: www.papyrus-uk.org

The **Compassionate Friends** is an organisation of bereaved parents and their families offering support to others who have experienced the death of a child. You can contact them:

By phone: 0845 123 2304

(10am-4pm, 7.00pm-10.00pm)

By email: helpline@tcf.org.uk

By post: 53 North Street, Bristol BS3 1EN

Website: www.tcf.org.uk

Cruse Bereavement Care Scotland offers free bereavement care and support through one-to-one counselling or local support groups. To find out about the availability of services in your area, contact the National Office:

By phone: 0845 600 2227

By email: info@crusescotland.org.uk

By post: Cruse Bereavement Care Scotland, Riverview House, Friarton Road, Perth PH2 8DF

Website: www.crusescotland.org.uk

PETAL (People Experiencing Trauma and Loss) provides practical and emotional support to those affected by murder or suicide. Contact them:

By phone: 01698 324502

Website: www.petalsupport.com

Email: info@petalsupport.com

Widowed by Suicide aims to reduce the isolation felt by those who have lost their life partner through suicide.

Email:

Jacqui@widowedbysuicide.org.uk

Website:

www.widowedbysuicide.org.uk

Scottish Government initiatives

The Scottish Government continues to keep suicide prevention a national and local priority. In December 2013 it launched a new suicide prevention strategy to run from 2013 to 2016.

The national programme for suicide prevention is hosted by NHS Health Scotland. The majority of local authorities in Scotland have a suicide prevention action plan and a named person who is responsible for co-ordinating suicide prevention activities. Find out more at: www.chooselife.net

The **'see me'** campaign was launched in October 2002 to challenge stigma and discrimination around mental ill-health in Scotland. Find out more at: www.seemescotland.org/

The **Scottish Recovery Network** raises awareness of recovery from mental health problems. Find out more at: www.scottishrecovery.net

Legal advice

If you need a solicitor, you can contact the **Law Society of Scotland:**

By phone: 0131 226 7411

By email: lawscot@lawscot.org.uk

By post: 26 Drumsheugh Gardens, Edinburgh EH3 7YR

Website: www.lawscot.org.uk

Welfare benefits

For advice on welfare benefits, contact: **Citizens Advice Direct** (CAD). You will find your local branch in your phonebook or contact them:

By phone: 0844 848 9600

Website: www.cas.org.uk

Money Advice Scotland can provide details of your local welfare rights projects:

By phone: 0141 572 0237

Website:

www.moneyadvicescotland.org.uk

Other advice

You can contact the **Mental Welfare Commission for Scotland** (MWC):

By phone: 0131 313 8777

User and carer advice line:

0800 389 6809

By email: enquiries@mwscot.org.uk

By post: Thistle House, 91 Haymarket Terrace, Edinburgh EH12 5HE

Website: www.mwscot.org.uk

You can contact the **Care Inspectorate** at their national headquarters:

By phone: 0845 600 9527

By email:

enquiries@careinspectorate.com

By post: Compass House, 11 Riverside, Dundee DD1 4NY

Website: www.scswis.com

Helpful books

- No Time to Say Goodbye: Surviving the Suicide of a Loved One, Carla Fine, Main Street Books, 1999, ISBN: 0385485514
- All in the End is Harvest: An Anthology of Poetry for Those Who Grieve, Agnes Whitaker, Darton, Longman & Todd Ltd, ISBN: 0232516243
- A Special Scar: The Experiences of People Bereaved by Suicide, Alison Wertheimer, Routledge, 2001, ISBN: 0415220270
- Healing After the Suicide of a Relative, Ann Smolin, Simon & Schuster Inc, 1993, ISBN: 0671796607
- Bathed in Blue, Rona Ross, Chipmunka, 2008, ISBN: 9781847477460
- Beyond the Rough Rock: Supporting a Child who has been Bereaved through Suicide. Available from Winston's Wish www.winstonswish.org.uk

Acknowledgements

This booklet was inspired by families who contacted the SAMH Information Service for advice and information. Their cases highlighted the need for information and support for people bereaved as a result of suicide. SAMH is particularly grateful to Graham and Rona Ross and family, who kindly allowed this booklet to be dedicated to the memory of their daughter Jennifer.

Our special thanks to the family and friends of Garry McMurray Bowers, who made a donation towards the first edition of the booklet in his memory, following his death on 7th January 2004, aged 22. We are also grateful to Choose Life at NHS Health Scotland for providing financial support towards the booklet's production and distribution. Many people offered helpful comments on the drafts of the booklet and we thank them all.

Further copies of this booklet can be obtained by contacting the SAMH Information Service on 0800 917 3466 or can be downloaded from the SAMH website at www.samh.org.uk

The information contained in this booklet is believed, but not warranted, to be accurate as at the date of publication. If you have any queries as to how any of this information may apply in your own particular circumstances, seek advice from a solicitor or other appropriate adviser.

© SAMH copyright 2012

If you are feeling overwhelmed by problems or are feeling suicidal, don't hide it. Talk to someone you trust or phone Breathing Space on 0800 83 85 87 or Samaritans on 116 123. **If you are having serious thoughts about suicide, and you have a plan and the means to carry it out: call 999 right now.**



chooselife

The national strategy and action plan
to prevent suicide in Scotland

Scottish Charity No SC0008897

Scottish Association for Mental Health. SAMH is a company limited by guarantee, registered in Scotland No 82340.

Registered office: Brunswick House, 51 Wilson Street.



Request for Occupational Health Assessment of Employee

Strictly Confidential

Service:	Service Group:
-----------------	-----------------------

1) Employee Details:

Surname:	Forenames:
Address:	
Telephone No:	Employee No:
Date of Birth:	
Designation:	
Date Commenced Service:	
Member of Strathclyde Pension Fund/Scottish Teachers' Superannuation Scheme: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Date entered scheme:	
Name and Address of Employee's own Doctor:	

Is the employee currently on sick leave? Yes No

If 'yes' date sickness commenced:

Balance of Sick Pay entitlement: Full Pay:
Sick Pay:

Type of Assessment required:

Occupational Health Assessment

*Ill Health Medical Retiral

* S18 must be attached if member of Strathclyde Pension Fund/SSPA medical form if member of Scottish Teachers' Superannuation Scheme.

2) Background

Reason for requesting Occupation Health Assessment and *specific* questions to be addressed by the Occupational Health Service:





Particulars of medical information known at present. (Copy of last statement of fitness for work to be attached):

Does the employee claim to suffer from an occupational accident/illness:
 Yes No

If yes – please provide details:

Brief description of the job undertaken (current job description must be enclosed);

3) ACTION REQUIRED

Please tick to confirm;

- Absence reports over the past three years attached
- Most recent Statement of Fitness for Work (Fit Note) attached (*photocopy is acceptable*)
- Current Job Description/Role Profile attached
- Employee Advised they are being referred for an Occupational Health Assessment

Completed By: (signature)		Date:
Print Name:		
Designation:		
Contact Tel. No:		

Completed referral paperwork must be sent to your Service Manager for authorisation and processing, who will return it to Occupational Health, Montgomerie House, West Byrehill Industrial Estate Kilwinning.

Head of Service/Principal Officer (signature)		Date:
--	--	--------------

ACCOUNT CODE		COST CENTRE	
---------------------	--	--------------------	--



CONFIDENTIAL

**COUNSELLING
REFERRAL FORM**



1. Employee Details:			
*Name :		*Service & Section:	
Employee No:			
Address:		*Date of Birth:	
POSTCODE:		*Current contact number:	
* Email address:			

2. Options for referral		Please note all questions marked in Red are mandatory and must be completed in order for a referral to be made. Failure to do so may result in a delay to referral.
PERSONAL		
WORK RELATED		
Has this employee been referred for counselling on a previous occasion?	YES/NO	

*Manager's Name	
Manager's Designation	
Manager Signature:	
*Service:	
*Department/Section:	
Date of Referral	
Authorisation Date	
Cost Centre:	
Budget Code:	

e.mail (official protect) to: occupationalhealth@north-ayrshire.gov.uk
Alternatively, print and complete then return the form to Occupational Health.

OCTOBER 2018