

# Signs of Suicide Risk

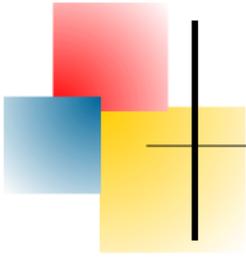
Suicide is a planned **action** that a person takes when they **feel** that death is the only answer to their emotional or physical pain, stress or problems. Death is felt to be the only escape. There are many reasons why someone may take their own life. The **feelings** surrounding these reasons are usually more significant than the reasons themselves and therefore it is important to understand these thoughts and feelings.

## **Risks that can Contribute to Suicidal Thoughts and Feelings:**

1. Having to cope with the pain of a serious physical or mental illness.
2. Excessive use of alcohol, illegal and/or prescription drugs and/or other substances.
3. Experiencing a traumatic event or major loss(es).
4. Recent suicide of a relative or friend, or family history of suicide.
5. Currently experiencing or have a history of coping with abuse, family violence, bullying or sexual assault.
6. Previous suicide attempts.
7. Major life change or series of changes (E.g. birth of a child, retirement, moving).
8. Sexual orientation issues and the impact of judgements
9. The aging process, loss of freedom, loneliness, and social isolation.
10. Peer pressure, low self-esteem, and self-inflicted harm as a way of coping.

**The Suicide Awareness Council of Wellington-Dufferin is dedicated to helping reduce suicide and its impact on individuals, families, and communities.**

If you find this fact sheet useful, please feel free to make copies and pass it along to others.  
For more information about the Council, go to [www.sacwd.ca](http://www.sacwd.ca)



## **Risk Factors that can Contribute to Suicidal Thoughts and Feelings:**

1. Depression: feelings of hopelessness/helplessness, despair, excessive crying, poor concentration, loss of meaning/pleasure in life, tendency to avoid people, change in eating, sleeping and activity levels.
2. Extreme anxiety: irritability, anger, tension, agitation, restlessness, and fearfulness.
3. Addiction: excessive use of alcohol, illegal and/or prescription drugs, and/or other substances to cope.
4. Anorexia, bulimia, binge eating.
5. Schizophrenia, bi-polar disorder, dementia.

## **Signs of Suicide Risk**

Suicidal thoughts are very painful and take up a great deal of energy.

Awareness of the possible signs of risk can lead to the person getting help sooner. Be alert to sudden changes in behaviour that are significant and that are noticeable in a person's life. Some of the warning signs are listed below:

- Suicidal threats
- Self-harming actions
- Previous suicide attempts
- Talking and joking about suicide
- Major personality changes, moodiness
- Preoccupation with the theme of death and dying
- Expressions of helplessness, hopelessness and desperation
- Giving away possessions to family and friends and making a Will
- Collection and discussion of information around various suicide methods
- Acting out of character, sudden changes in behaviour (either positively or negatively)