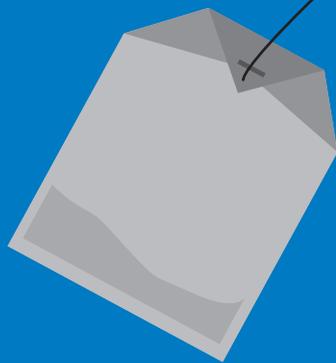


Talking to someone who  
might be suicidal

To some it's a tea bag. To others it's a lifeline...



Support the Big Brew campaign.  
Help us tackle the stigma that stops  
so many from asking for help.





## Uncomfortable isn't it?

**The word 'Suicide'.**

**Too uncomfortable to mention.**

No-one likes to talk about it, but that's why people who are in need of help, don't ask.

It's the fear of being shunned, discriminated against or worse. The fear that there's no one out there who cares, no one out there who'll listen to them.

So they try to just manage, and attempt to live their life as 'normal'.

Until one day. It all becomes too much...

That's where we can all do something.

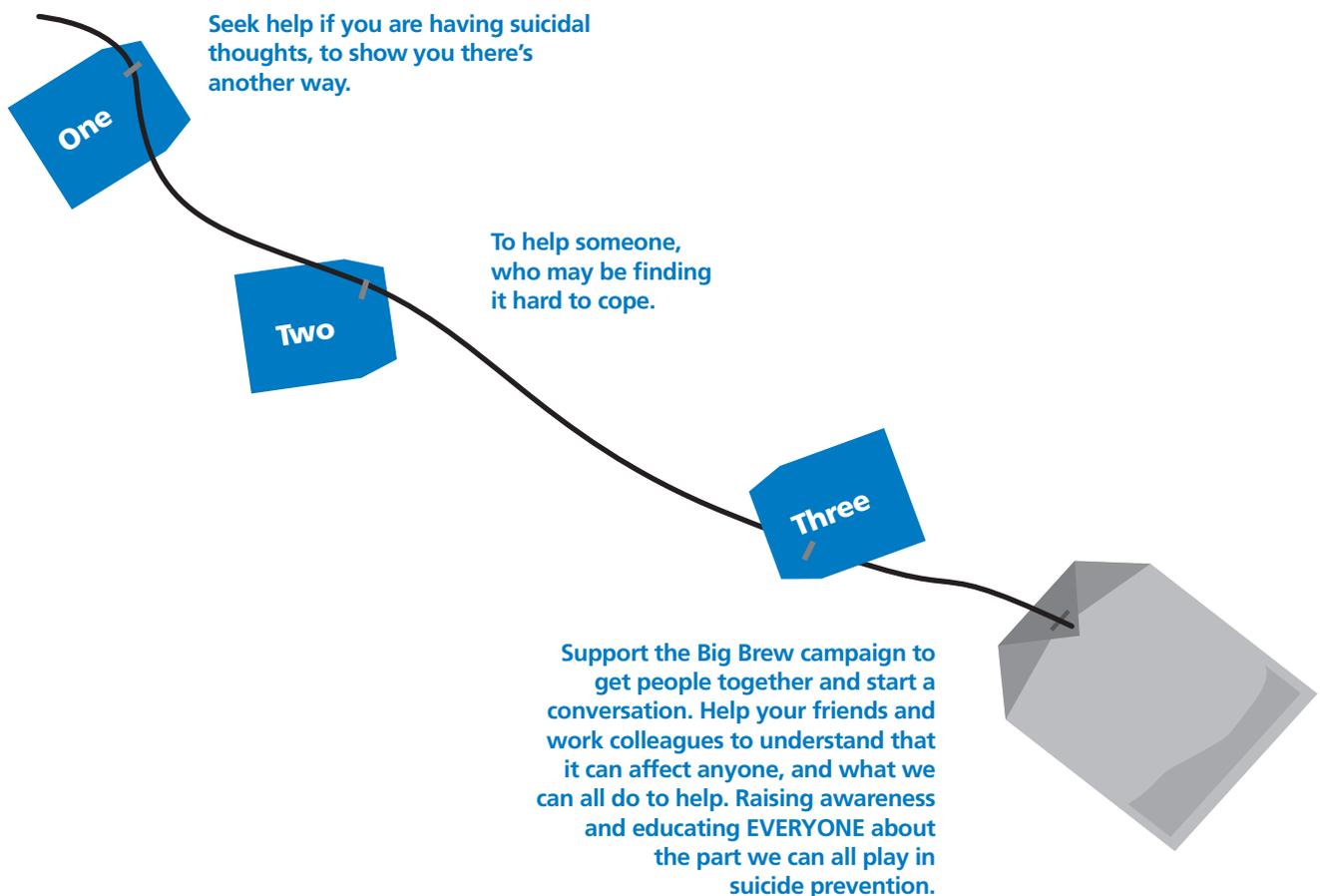
 **I'm not as strong as everyone thinks I am.** 

**The Big Brew**

**"Nobody sees that I'm already dead inside."**

**The Mersey Care Big Brew campaign wants to shatter this stigma by getting more people talking about suicide, sharing thoughts, offering support.** There's more of us affected by it than you think. Because it's only when we start talking about suicide that we realise how many of our friends, neighbours and colleagues' lives have been touched by it.

**We want to help you:**



The smallest displays of kindness, like the offer of a brew, and the conversation that follows, could be the first step to helping someone... ultimately even saving a life.



Do you know

someone

who needs

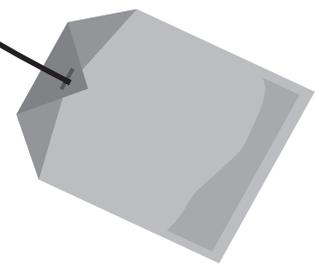
help

One person in the UK dies from suicide every two hours.

(The latest figures from the National Office of Statistics show that in 2013 a total of 6,708 people in the UK took their own lives.) That's 4,722 lives lost in England alone.

They are fathers and mothers, sons and daughters, friends and colleagues. Many could have been helped if only the stigma of mental health hadn't prevented them from sharing their feelings.

**Emotional support and understanding offered to someone who feels like they can't go on can have a hugely positive effect. If people feel they can ask for help and find it when they need it, then many more suicides could be prevented.**

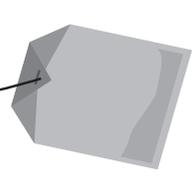


"I'm getting worse. And you don't even know. I'm slowly giving up."

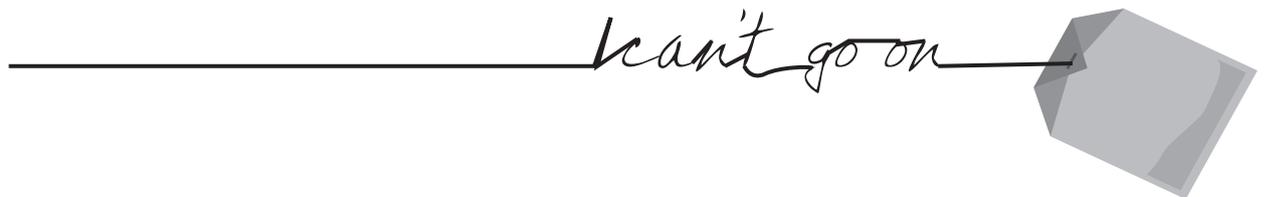
"Help me please."

"She sits and cries at night hoping she won't wake up when daylight breaks..."

"People always tell me that I look sad and tired. I know I look sad and tired. Because I am sad and tired."



## Why would someone choose to kill themselves?



**There's no single answer as to why some people choose suicide. But these factors can increase the risk:**

- Drug and alcohol misuse
- History of trauma or abuse
- Unemployment
- Social isolation
- Poverty
- Poor social conditions
- Imprisonment
- Violence
- Family breakdown.

### **Some people are more at risk**

#### **Young people**

Bullying, family disputes, mental health problems, unemployment and a family history of suicide can all increase the risk for younger people.

#### **People aged 45 and over**

The highest suicide rate in the UK is among 45 to 49 year olds. Money worries; poor quality housing, loneliness, depression and illness can all play a part in the decision to attempt suicide.

#### **Men**

Suicide is the biggest killer of men between 20 and 49. Of the 5,981 suicides in 2012, 76 percent were men. Societal pressure on men to be strong, independent, tough and 'together', often discourages them from seeking help and talking about how they feel.





## Suicide. Spotting the signs

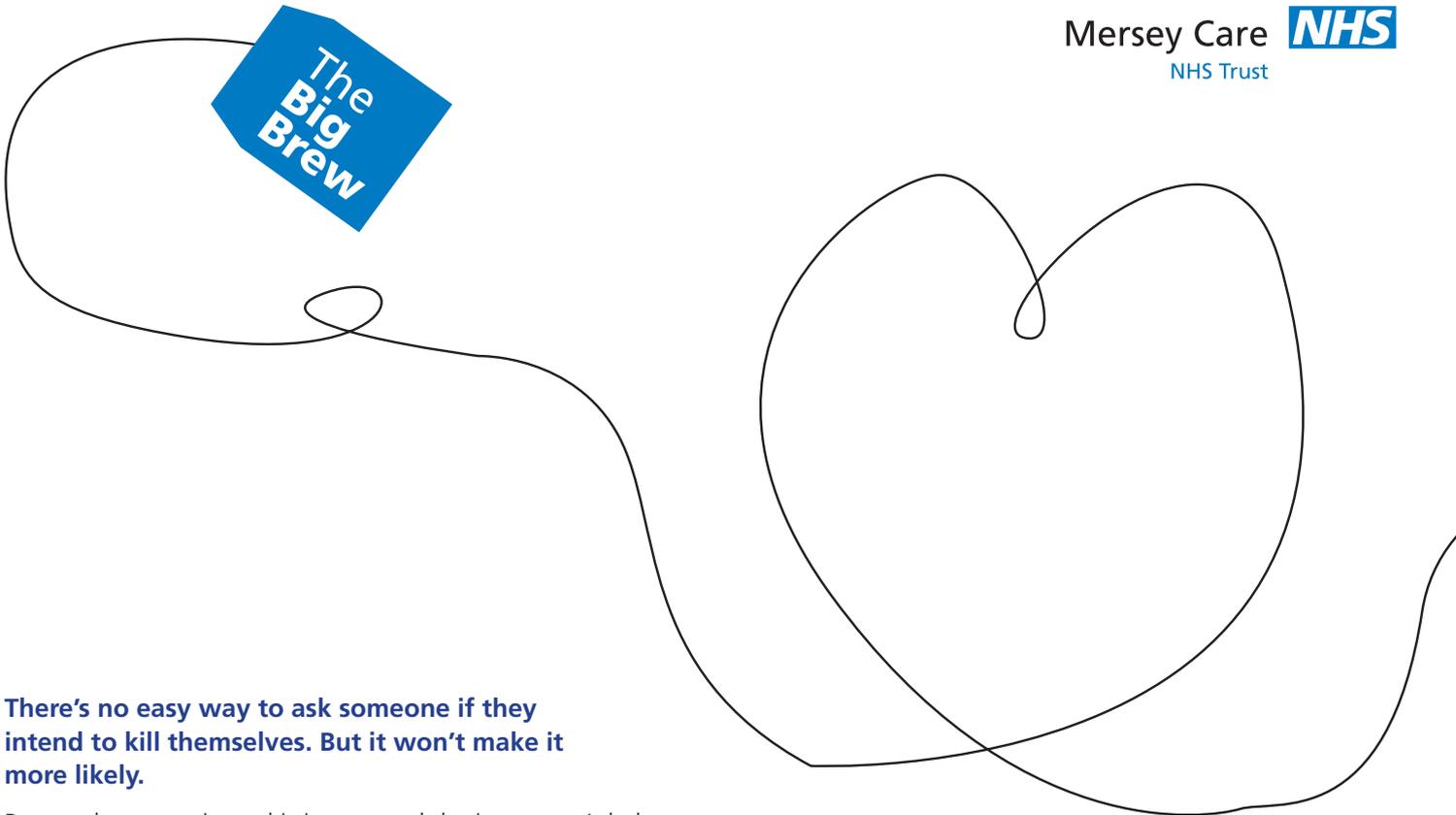
**Not everyone who is contemplating suicide lets their friends or family know how they are feeling.**

Signs to look out for include:

- Complaining of feeling hopeless
- A pattern of sudden rage
- Risky behaviour with little concern about the consequences
- Talking about feeling trapped
- Self-harming
- Misusing drugs or alcohol more than usual
- Change in appetite
- Withdrawing from friends and family
- Anxiety
- Trouble sleeping, or sleeping too much
- Sudden lift in mood after being depressed
- Losing interest in most things, including own appearance
- Sorting out possessions or making a will.

**“Everyone thinks  
I’m better.  
I’m not. I’ve just got  
better at hiding it.”**





## The Big Brew

**There's no easy way to ask someone if they intend to kill themselves. But it won't make it more likely.**

But, at the same time, skirting around the issue won't help. The best approach is to be sensitive yet direct by asking such questions as:

Are you thinking about hurting yourself?

Are you thinking about dying?

Are you thinking about suicide?

**Remember, mentioning suicide to someone who's already thinking about it will NOT encourage them to go through with it.**

## Talking and listening

Don't ever be put off approaching someone who you think may be at risk of suicide because you don't know what to say.

One of the best things you can do for a person who may be feeling suicidal is to simply encourage them to talk about their feelings. And to make sure you really listen to what they're saying.

Talking about someone's problems is not always easy and it may be tempting for you to try to offer a solution. But often the most important thing you can do to help is listen to what they have to say.

It's also important that the person who needs help doesn't feel judged by those who are trying to support them.

For instance, comments such as "Don't you think you might be drinking too much?" can sometimes make the situation worse. Reassurance, respect and support are what can help during these difficult periods.

## Opening up through asking questions

Asking questions can be a useful way of letting a person remain in control while allowing them to talk about how they're feeling.

Try not to influence what the person says, but give them the opportunity to talk honestly and openly. This is helped by asking open-ended questions such as "Where did that happen?" and "How did that feel?", encouraging them to keep on talking.

On the other hand make sure you avoid statements that could possibly end the conversation, such as "I know how you feel" and "Try not to worry about it".

## Getting professional help

Although talking to someone about their feelings is invaluable in helping them feel safe and secure at the time, these feelings may not last. It will probably require long term support to help someone overcome their suicidal thoughts.

This will most likely be easier with professional help, for example, sharing your concerns with a GP. Not only can a professional deal with the underlying issues behind someone's suicidal thoughts, they can also offer advice and support for you.

**If there is an immediate danger, make sure they are not left on their own.**



## Things we can ALL do to increase our mental wellbeing

**There's more to good mental health than avoiding or treating mental illness. There is also positive mental wellbeing. Feelings of contentment, enjoyment, confidence and engagement with the world are all a part of mental wellbeing.**

**There are five simple steps we can all take to improve our mental wellbeing:**

### Step 1 - Stay active

Exercise can be a great way to improve your mental health. It can help to reduce stress and anxiety, help you sleep better, and boost overall mood. Research has shown that even modest amounts of exercise, like regular walking, can make a difference.

### Step 2 - Eat well

Experts believe that a healthy, balanced diet can have a positive effect on mood. Current NHS guidelines on healthy eating recommend including the following in your daily diet:

- Plenty of fruit and vegetables
- Plenty of potatoes, bread, rice, pasta and other starchy foods
- Some milk and dairy foods
- Some meat, fish, eggs, beans and other non-dairy sources of protein
- Just a small amount of food and drink that is high in fat or sugar.

### Step 3 - Limit alcohol

When you're feeling low, alcohol can be a tempting distraction. But it's also a depressant, which means it can make negative emotions worse. The recommended daily limits of alcohol are:

- Three to four units a day for men
- Two to three units a day for women
- If you've had a heavy drinking session, avoid alcohol for 48 hours.

A unit of alcohol is about half a pint of normal strength lager or a single measure (25ml) of spirits. A small glass of wine (125ml) is 1.5 units.

### Step 4 - Avoid drugs

For people experiencing unpleasant emotions, drugs can be seen as a way of coping. But drug misuse can actually increase the risk of developing a mental health condition, such as depression.

Speak to your GP if you find it difficult to stop taking drugs.

### Step 5 - Stay social

Losing touch with friends and family can be a significant risk factor for suicide.

If you find it difficult to make friends, you may benefit from joining a local group, such as a book group or exercise group.

## Helpful contacts

### MIND

[www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk)

0300 123 3393 Weekdays 9am to 6pm

### The Samaritans

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

116 123 24 hours a day

### CALM

[www.thecalmzone.net](http://www.thecalmzone.net)

0800 58 58 58 5pm to midnight, 365 days a year

### Saneline

[www.sane.org.uk](http://www.sane.org.uk)

0300 304 7000 6pm to 11pm every evening

### TALK LIVERPOOL

[www.talkliverpool.nhs.uk](http://www.talkliverpool.nhs.uk)

0151 228 2300 Weekdays 9am to 6pm

