

Myths and facts about self-harm and suicide



Myth...	Fact...
Self-harm is an attempt at suicide or means that the person is suicidal.	<p>There are many reasons why someone may self-harm, and self-harm is not necessarily a suicide attempt.</p> <p>That said, people who self-harm are at higher risk of future suicide, and self-harm should always be taken seriously.</p>
Self-harm is attention seeking.	Most people who self-harm are not trying to get attention. In fact, many people go to great lengths to hide their self-harm from others.
People who self-harm or think about suicide have a mental disorder.	Although many people who self-harm or think about suicide may be experiencing mental health problems, this is not always the case. Self-harm and suicide can affect anyone.
Talking about suicide will put the idea in someone's head or encourage them to attempt suicide.	Talking about suicide safely does not put ideas into anyone's head or increase the likelihood of suicidal thoughts or behaviours. Talking openly and safely about suicidal thoughts, feelings, or behaviours can be beneficial.
It is not a good idea to ask someone if they are feeling suicidal.	Using the word 'suicide' or asking a person if they're having suicidal thoughts is not harmful or unsafe. Asking this question directly can give people the opportunity to talk about how they're feeling and what they might need.
Joking about suicide or telling other people to kill themselves is harmless.	<p>Jokes about suicide can be very distressing to others, even if you don't mean to cause any harm. This can also be very upsetting to people who have experienced suicidal thoughts or behaviours before, or lost someone to suicide.</p> <p>Telling other people to kill themselves, even as a joke, can also be distressing and can increase the risk of harm. It is never safe to joke about or encourage suicide.</p>
There is nothing anyone can do to stop suicide. People who make suicide attempts are determined to die, and suicide deaths happen without warning.	<p>Some people who experience suicidal thoughts or make a suicide attempt are struggling to cope and do not necessarily want to die.</p> <p>Getting support at the right time can reduce this distress and prevent suicide. It is important to know how to recognise when a person is at risk, and to be able to support them to seek help.</p>



For more information, see our guidelines on safe online communication about self-harm and suicide: <https://www.orygen.org.au/chatsafe>

