



## **Coping With Thoughts of Suicide During the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Pandemic**

The COVID-19 pandemic can affect you and your loved ones' mental and emotional well-being. It is natural to feel overwhelmed, sad, anxious and afraid. Physical distancing can feel isolating for everyone and can be even harder for people who struggle with thoughts of suicide. Many people are also experiencing financial distress, loss of friends and family due to COVID-19, and other significant stressors that can affect mental and emotional well-being. Below are some suggestions and resources for suicide prevention.

**If you are thinking about suicide, or know someone who is, counselors are available to listen to and support you 24/7. Contact NYC Well by calling 888-NYC-WELL (888-692-9355), texting "WELL" to 65173 or chatting at [nyc.gov/nycwell](https://nyc.gov/nycwell).**

**If you or someone you know is at immediate risk of hurting themselves, or in immediate danger because of a health condition or other situation, call 911.**

### **If you are having thoughts of suicide:**

#### **Create or Update a Suicide Safety Plan**

- A suicide safety plan is a written set of instructions to remind you what to do in the future if or when you think about harming yourself. It is a list of steps you can follow until you feel safe.
- You can work with someone you love or trust to create or update a suicide safety plan. If you do not already have a suicide safety plan, you can use this [Safety Plan Template](#) as a guide, or visit [nyc.gov/nycwell](https://nyc.gov/nycwell) and click on "Crisis Services," then "Safety Plan."
- Share your completed or updated safety plan with people with whom you feel comfortable asking for emotional support or people with whom you are in frequent contact.

#### **Seek Mental Health Support From Home**

- If negative feelings become overwhelming, reach out for support and help. You can contact NYC Well, a confidential 24/7 helpline staffed by trained counselors. NYC Well counselors provide brief counseling and referrals in over 200 languages. For care, call 888-NYC-WELL (888-692-9355), text "WELL" to 65173 or chat at [nyc.gov/nycwell](https://nyc.gov/nycwell).
  - The [NYC Well](#) website also offers a number of well-being and emotional support [apps](#) that can help you cope: Visit [nyc.gov/nycwell](https://nyc.gov/nycwell) and click on "App Library."

- For additional information about stress and anxiety, including tips for coping and staying connected, as well as information about grief and loss, visit the New York City (NYC) Health Department's [COVID-19: Coping and Emotional Well-Being](#) web page.
- The New York State (NYS) COVID-19 Emotional Support Helpline at 844-863-9314 is available from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m., seven days a week. The helpline is staffed with professionals who are there to listen, support and refer to care.

**If you have had thoughts of suicide or have attempted suicide in the past, even if you feel well now, take extra care of yourself during this time:**

**Take Care of Your Body**

- Stay physically active by moving more and sitting less. In addition, get enough sleep, eat well, and avoid excessive amounts of alcohol, non-prescribed drugs and caffeine.
- For general information about COVID-19, visit [nyc.gov/health/coronavirus](https://nyc.gov/health/coronavirus) or [cdc.gov/covid19](https://cdc.gov/covid19). For real-time updates, text "COVID" to 692-692. Message and data rates may apply.

**Take Care of Your Mind and Stay Connected**

- Set a limit on the amount of media you watch and read, including social media, local or national news.
- Connect and talk with loved ones, friends and family via phone or video chat.

**If you know a person who might be thinking about suicide:**

**Know the Warning Signs and Check in on Your Loved Ones**

- Pay attention to the way a person talks and behaves. This can help you recognize when someone may be thinking about suicide. Warning signs can include:
  - Talking about death or suicide
  - Showing feelings of hopelessness
  - Saying they are a burden
  - Avoiding friends and family
  - Losing interest in activities
  - Displaying extreme mood swings
  - Giving away possessions
  - Saying goodbye to family and friends
- Physical distancing can make warning signs harder to observe. Check in with your loved ones to see how they are coping, especially those with a history of suicide, depression, anxiety or other mental illness, or those who have experienced a recent loss.

- Supportive adults play critical roles in the lives of young people at risk for suicide. For more information, refer to the NYC Health Department’s [Suicide Prevention](#) web page or visit [nyc.gov/health](https://nyc.gov/health) and search for “Suicide Prevention.” The page includes tips and resources, including how to support lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer (LGBTQ) youth.

### **Listen and Don’t Be Afraid to Talk About Suicide**

- Be a good listener. You don’t have to be a mental health expert to talk with someone about their worries, stress and fear. To learn more about active listening, check out NYC Well’s [Helping Friends or Family in Crisis](#).
- Don’t be afraid to ask someone if they are thinking about suicide. A common misconception is that talking about suicide will give someone the idea to harm themselves. This is not true. By asking, you are giving someone an opportunity to open up and allow you to help.

### **Suggest They Seek Professional Mental Health Support, or Help Them Connect to Support**

- When someone you know needs support, they can:
  - Visit [NYC Well](#), or call 888-NYC-WELL (888-692-9355), text “WELL” to 65173 or chat at [nyc.gov/nycwell](https://nyc.gov/nycwell).
  - Visit the NYC Health Department’s [COVID-19: Coping and Emotional Well-Being](#) web page.
  - Call the NYS COVID-19 Emotional Support Helpline at 844-863-9314.