

Carer Information Sheet – Distressed Persons

If it is an emergency and you feel like you or someone else is at risk, call 111.

Or call your local mental health crisis team if you would like the person to be assessed:

- **West Coast** – 0800 757 678
- **Christchurch** – 0800 920 092
- **Ashburton** – 0800 222 955
- **South Canterbury (Timaru)** – 0800 277 997
- Or see <https://mentalhealth.org.nz/help>




- **On the West Coast/Greymouth, you can also call Te Nikau Hospital (03) 769 7400,** come to the main reception desk or Emergency Department (24 hours) and ask our staff to guide you.

Keeping someone safe

If someone expresses suicidal thoughts or shows signs of extreme distress after a bereavement:

- It is essential that professional help is sought to check for risks.
- Make sure they can get help anytime and know who to call.
- Remove access to objects that could be used to harm themselves eg. razors or firearms.
- Make sure you are aware of signs that might show they are feeling worse and need help. See below.
- Help them identify things they enjoy, are good at, or reasons for living, and support them in these. See over.

Warning signs that someone might be very distressed and/or thinking about suicide

<p>TALKING ABOUT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wanting to die• Great guilt or shame• Being a burden to others 	<p>FEELING:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Empty, hopeless, trapped, or having no reason to live• Extremely sad, agitated, more anxious, full of rage• Unbearable emotional or physical pain 
<p>CHANGING BEHAVIOUR, SUCH AS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Making a plan or researching ways to die• Taking dangerous risks such as driving extremely fast• Displaying extreme mood swings• Eating or sleeping more or less• Using drugs or alcohol more often• Withdrawing from friends, saying goodbye, giving away valued items, or making a will 	
<p>If these warning signs apply to you or someone you know, get help as soon as possible, particularly if the behaviour is new or has increased recently.</p>	

Managing emotional distress

If you or a loved one are experiencing severe distress, anxiety or low mood, consider seeing a GP, Urgent care or Emergency Department for assessment and support.

At home, website-based information and talking therapies (available by phone) can be helpful to make sense of distressing emotions or thoughts and can give advice about how to recognise emergencies or concerning symptoms. Websites have some helpful strategies for managing strong emotions including anxiety, distress, low mood or depression symptoms and keeping adults and young people safe. See:

- **1737** –text or phone for free confidential mental health support from a trained counsellor.
- **Youthline** – free counselling for anyone aged under 25 years. Phone 0800 37 66 33 or text 234, or go to the Youthline website
- **0800 What's Up:** Call 0800 942 8787 (11am to 11pm) or visit www.whatsup.co.nz
- **Depression helpline:** Call 0800 111 757 (available 24/7) or visit www.depression.org
- **After a suicide** - visit <https://aftersuicide.nz/first-reactions/emotions-and-reactions>
- **Small Steps** - <https://www.smallsteps.org.nz/> free online tools for stress and wellbeing.
- **Just a Thought** - free online strategies for anxiety, depression, insomnia and other problems www.justathought.co.nz
- **Aoake Te Ra** - free confidential counselling for people impacted by a suspected suicide death. Funded by Ministry of Health, you can self-refer online or your workplace HR, or your GP or Counsellor can refer you. www.aoketera.org.nz

Supporting yourself or others if you or they are distressed or bereaved.

- Looking after yourself is very important. You may also be supporting others.
- Be kind to yourself. Be kind and empathetic to others. Something big has happened and it may take time to move forward. Look out for people who may be struggling.
- Be aware other people may have different spiritual beliefs. Respect their beliefs.
- Be respectful of a person and/or a family's right to privacy. Treat any information you have confidentially.
- We all grieve in our own way. Shock, loss or grief can be present in many ways. Sometimes it can be hard to find words to express how you feel, or you may feel numb, as if you had no feelings. This is okay at this time.
- Take good care of your health. Eat well, rest, avoid use of alcohol and drugs.
- Find some quiet space, slow down. Do things that you enjoy or find comforting.
- Find a support person - a friend, relative, counsellor. A counsellor will provide confidential support. See your GP.
- **Help is available.** A lot of help is being provided in your community and is available. Use the free phone counselling options listed above or approach your GP, counsellor, health worker, trusted friend or community member who can advise you about support.

In an emergency - call 111 for help