



Highland
Community
Planning
Partnership

Suicide Prevention
Scotland.

The Impact of Suicide

A short film for groups of young people in school or community groups (S4, 5 and 6)

Guidance notes

On average 135 people will be impacted by one suicide, some more than others and while some may feel guilty for a variety of reasons by the person's loss, others may feel they have no right to be grieving at all.

The aim of this film is to raise awareness and acknowledge the much wider impact a suicide can have on young people and the people around them; to highlight the importance of self-care and reaching out for support at an early stage; to help signpost to support, regardless of their relationship to the person who has died by or attempted suicide.

These guidance notes are designed to support anyone sharing this film as part of a wider health and wellbeing programme with groups of young people in S4, 5 and 6. Ensuring everyone's safety and wellbeing within conversations about suicide is vital.

Before the session

Sensitive Timing

- Careful consideration should be given if people or community have recent experience of suicide or other sudden death and bereavement. Care should be taken to manage risk of further traumatising.

Think about who is delivering this session

- Are they confident in talking about suicide with compassion and understanding?
- They should have completed informed level training, which will be available May 2026.
- Do they understand the impact of stigma and language on people who are feeling suicidal or have been bereaved by suicide?
- Are they able to respond to someone expressing suicidal thoughts or distress?
- Do they have a good understanding of where to signpost someone in need of support?
- Do they have a good working understanding of safeguarding policies in case of any disclosure?
- Do they have access to support and debrief?

Prepare parents/carers/relevant staff

- Parents/carers/relevant staff should be made aware of the session in advance and significant adults about the content of the session. Suggested text might be:

Dear Parent/Carer/Colleague,

We would like to let you know that young people will be taking part in a wellbeing session that includes viewing a short film titled **The Impact of Suicide**. The film explores how a suicide can affect a wide circle of people, highlights the importance of looking after ourselves, and encourages young people to seek support if they need it.

The session will be delivered sensitively and thoughtfully, with a focus on safety and wellbeing. Young people will be made aware of the content in advance and will be supported throughout. They will also have the option to pause, take a break, or step out at any point.

We recognise that suicide can be an emotive topic. If your young person has been personally affected by bereavement or difficult experiences, please feel free to get in touch so we can provide appropriate support. If you have any questions about the session or would like more information, please contact us.

Kind regards,

[contact details]

Think about the space and environment

Young people should be made aware of the content and purpose of the film allowing them to make an informed choice to be part of the conversation. Your conversation with them should include:

- Are they comfortable talking and hearing about suicide? Suicide can be an emotive subject and it may trigger the recall of experiences?
- Do you have support to deal with any issues that may arise?
- Do you have any questions/concerns about attending the course?
- Is the meeting space private and protected from interruptions?
- Is there an alternative breakout space should anyone want to opt out of the session or take a break.

During the session

- Share the 'Impacted by Suicide' leaflet – these can be ordered [here](#) or downloaded using [this link](#)
- Share the Enabling Conversations leaflet – these can be ordered [here](#) or downloaded via [this link](#)
- Establish group guidelines, even if this is a group of young people who already know each other and regularly meet. This can include:
 - o Listen and respect each other's views and experiences
 - o Be kind
 - o What is said the space, stays in the space. Share your story but no-one else's
 - o If someone leaves the space, seek agreement that a presenter will give them a minute and then check in with them.
- Always use non-judgmental, person-first language (e.g. "person experiencing suicidal thoughts", "die by suicide"). Avoid stigmatising language such as "committed/commit suicide". You can view [Samaritans' communications guidelines](#) to know how to appropriately speak about suicide.

When showing the film:

- Provide another gentle content warning
- Briefly outline the film's purpose (e.g., raising awareness, starting safe conversations, highlighting help seeking)
- Reinforce that young people can pause or step out if needed.

After the viewing:

- You might ask, what message stood out to you? What feels important? How does it feel talking/asking about suicide or distressing feelings?
- It's ok to allow young people to share personal/professional experiences and validate them. However, gently redirect conversation if someone's personal story is dominating, making sure to follow up with them at the end of the session to listen and signpost them to support if necessary.
- Emphasise that suicidal thoughts can happen to anyone from any walk of life.
- Highlight hope, resilience and real pathways to support, emphasising suicide is preventable.
- Reiterate support information and the strength there is in talking to someone and in listening to someone.

Support and Safeguarding

- Free training is available to people working (paid or unpaid) with communities: [Suicide Intervention and Prevention Programme](#)
- Sources of support are available on the [Highland Mental Wellbeing website](#).
- Download the [Highland Prevent Suicide app](#).
- Find out more about [Suicide Prevention Scotland](#) and the [Enabling Conversations toolkit](#).

For additional support in planning a session or any questions you might have about it, email the Primary Mental Health Worker Service, PMHW@highland.gov.uk, and one of the team will be happy to help.

Safeguarding

If you are concerned about any young people having thoughts of suicide, you can do no harm by asking. Download the Prevent Suicide Highland App to guide you through asking these questions:

- Do you have thoughts of suicide?
- Have you had any thoughts about taking your own life/dying?

If they say yes, ask:

- Are the thoughts about wanting to die?
- Or if you were able to press pause or flick a switch to turn things off until they were fixed or were able to deal with them, would that be the option? Sometimes when we are overwhelmed that is how we feel.

If they are thinking they want to die, ask:

- Do you have a plan?
- Have you thought about when? How? Other detail?

If they have a plan, act now

- If you are concerned about risk, follow confidentiality procedures, the GIRFEC practical model, child protection and contact the parents.
- You can phone the duty clinician at Phoenix Centre on 01463 705597.

If they don't have a plan

- Discuss a safety plan and agree some regular check in times.
- You are not on your own – you can call the duty clinician or discuss with the Primary Mental Health Worker team.
- You can go back to normal procedures in terms of the GIRFEC practice model and use My World Triangle to discuss other current needs.
- Safety plans can be Staying Safe or within the Highland Prevent Suicide app.