**STEPPING UP FLOWCHART**  
Identifying suicide risk and keeping people safe

When you ask about suicide, you need to be clear and direct, for example you could say:

“The things you’re saying make it sound like you’re having thoughts of suicide? Is that something that’s on your mind?”

“Are you thinking about taking your own life?”

**If the answer is Yes**

Ask about intensity
Q. How intense are your thoughts of suicide?
Q. How long have you been feeling this way?
(See the attached “Exploring intensity” sheet).

Help the person identify their protective factors
Q. What has helped to keep you safe up till now?
Q. What would help to keep you safe for the next hour, or day, or week?
Agree with the person a plan to keep them safe.

Give key contacts for mental health support
Use the attached pages to explain to the person how to access support. Many local support services are listed on www.happyoksad.org.uk.

Make sure they’re clear how to get support if they don’t feel they can keep themselves safe.
(See attached sheet “If someone can’t cope . .”)

**If the answer is No**

Ask about intensity
Q. How intense are your thoughts of suicide?
Q. How long have you been feeling this way?
(See the attached “Exploring intensity” sheet).

Ask about plans for suicide
Q. Have you thought about how you’d take your own life?
Q. Have you made a plan for how you’d take your life? (i.e. where, how, when)

Ask about intention
Q. Do you think you’ll act on your suicidal feelings?

Yes    No

**Staying Safe**
Explain that you’re really concerned for their safety and you don’t want to leave them, until there’s a plan in place to keep them safe.

Ask if they are already in touch with any support services, such as their GP or mental health services.

**Emergency action**
Arrange help (see attached sheet “If someone can’t cope . .”).

Inform your manager, follow your policy
Follow your organisation’s policy in relation to suicide risk, or disclosure of suicide.
If you don’t have a policy within your organisation, PAPYRUS can advise you on drawing one up: www.papyrus-uk.org

Help the person identify how they’ll stay safe until they access further support.
If someone can’t cope, or is feeling suicidal then they should:

- **talk to their GP**, if the GP surgery is closed they should **ring NHS 111** (this number has replaced the GP Out of Hours phone number).

- **if they’re 18 or over they can ring the Warrington and Halton Assessment Team on 01925 666647.**

The Assessment Team is for adults with moderate to severe symptoms of mental health problems. It is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. GPs can refer people to the Assessment Team, or people in crisis can contact the Team themselves without first seeing their GP. Assessment Team staff will screen each person, over the phone, to identify their needs. Then they’ll provide advice or signpost or refer the person to the most appropriate service.

Members of the Assessment Team are happy to advise support workers who are concerned about someone.

The GP, or the Assessment Team, are the services people are advised to contact if they have symptoms of mental health problems, feel suicidal and can’t cope. If someone is 18 or over and has symptoms of mental health problems or feels suicidal, it’s best not to attend the A&E department of Warrington Hospital, unless they also need medical attention for their physical health.

- **If someone is under 18** and is feeling desperate, or is having thoughts of suicide they should go to the A&E department of Warrington Hospital.

If you are concerned that someone **of any age** is feeling suicidal, then:

- you could **contact the person’s GP, or another support service you know the person is in touch with**

- you could **get in touch with their Care Coordinator** (if they have one)

- if there’s immediate danger of someone taking their own life ring 999
Helplines, text and web-based support

The charities below support people who feel suicidal, or who are struggling to cope:

**CALM (Campaign Against Living Miserably)**
CALM is for men who are down, or finding it hard to cope. The helpline and webchat are free and confidential and are open every day from 5pm to midnight.

www.thecalmzone.net
0800 58 58 58

**Samaritans**
This charity offers confidential support, at any time of the day or night, to anyone who feels troubled. You don’t have to be suicidal to get in touch with the Samaritans. You can call, email, write, or visit the Samaritans face-to-face.

08457 90 90 90
jo@samaritans.org
www.samaritans.org

**PAPYRUS**
PAPYRUS is for young people who are having thoughts of suicide and anyone who is worried that a young person may be at risk of suicide.

Callers don’t have to give their name, or any personal details. All calls are confidential, but if an advisor is concerned about a caller’s safety then PAPYRUS may contact emergency services to ensure the caller doesn’t come to harm.

HOPELineUK 0800 068 41 41
Text 07786 209697
pat@papyrus-uk.org
www.papyrus-uk.org
Exploring Intensity

It would be useful for us to get a better understanding of the difficult feelings you mentioned:

- How long have you been feeling like this? (*duration*)
- What triggers feelings like this? (*where, with whom, when*)
- What effect does this have on your life? (*impact and coping*)

If the person:

- has been feeling like this for a couple of weeks
- feels like this much of the time
- has particularly strong feelings with specific triggers
- is struggling with day to day life because of their feelings

then signpost, or refer them into mental health support services.

Visit www.happyoksad.org.uk for information about mental health support in Warrington.

If the person has particularly intense or troubling feelings, then ask if they are thinking about ending their life.

See the “Stepping up Flowchart” for examples of useful questions to ask.

See the “If someone can’t cope . . .” sheet for routes into services when support is needed urgently.

*This information was compiled by Warrington Borough Council’s Public Health Team.*

*It was adapted from training materials collaboratively developed by Public Health Teams in Bolton, Manchester and Stockport.*