

# Anglicare **Attempted Suicide Aftercare Program (ASAP)**

Our service  
is **voluntary,**  
**confidential**  
and **free.**

Family  
resource  
booklet

1800 243 232  
[anglicare-tas.org.au](http://anglicare-tas.org.au)



**Anglicare**<sup>TAS</sup>  
*Choice, support and hope*

## Our mission

Anglicare, in response to the Christian faith, strives to achieve social justice and provide the opportunity for people in need to reach fullness of life.

## Our values:

### Hope:

Confidently reaching for fullness of life.

### Compassion:

Showing empathy and care for those in need.

### Justice:

Promoting the fair distribution of resources and opportunities.

### Respect:

Recognising the inherent value and dignity of every person.

*Anglicare has been a trusted, not-for-profit provider of support to Tasmanians for over 30 years, offering choice, support and hope.*

## Support when life is difficult.

### Facing life's challenges together.

Anglicare provides choice, professional support and hope for all Tasmanians. Our wide range of services include:

- Housing and homelessness
- Programs for children, young people and families
- Financial counselling
- Alcohol and other drugs
- Gambling support

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*With thanks to SuicideLine Victoria for sharing this information.*

## Common reactions to a suicide attempt

Finding out that someone you care about has tried to end their life can be an extremely challenging experience. You may experience emotions such as shock and denial or you may blame yourself for what has happened. "If only I'd watched them more closely".

### Common feelings that people have when a family member or friend attempts suicide can include:

- **Anger:** How could they do this to me/us?
- **Shame:** I will have to keep this a secret.
- **Guilt:** I didn't love/watch/listen to them enough?
- **Fear:** Will they try again?
- **Avoidance:** If we pretend this didn't happen, it will go away.
- **Minimisation:** They are just trying to get attention.
- **Cutting off:** This is not my problem - someone else can deal with it.

It is important to remember that if someone close to you or a loved one has attempted suicide, it is not your fault.

The period after a suicide attempt is not easy, and it is natural for people to experience different feelings, concerns and thoughts, and you may not be sure what to say, or do.

Allowing time to recover emotionally, physically and psychologically is important.

Friends, family and other key supporters can play a significant role in supporting someone through the days and weeks following a suicide attempt.

Others can help you – engaging your GP or talking with an allied health professional (counsellor, suicide worker, psychologist etc.) can also help make this period more manageable with expert advice and support.

Anglicare Tasmania's Attempted Suicide Aftercare Program (ASAP) recognises there are many in-depth and useful resources already developed and available both online and in a printable version.

These resources, together with information in this booklet, provide brief information for people who are supporting a friend or family member who has attempted to end their life.

## Supporting someone after a suicide attempt

Supporting someone after a suicide attempt can be extremely valuable to that friend or family member. It can also be stressful for the support person, and it is important to remember to look after yourself and get the support you need, as this is not something you need to deal with alone. Ensure you have adequate support systems in place for yourself. Identify trusted family members or friends that you can talk to, or join a local support group. If you are finding it difficult, you may also wish to consider counselling or other professional support for yourself.

Let the person know you are there, and that they can talk to you when they feel ready. Don't expect to understand everything they're feeling or thinking. Listen without interrupting and avoid asking a lot of curious questions about 'why'. This can be very supportive to the person.

**Letting your friend or family member know you are supporting them, and asking open-ended questions, can help communication.**

**For example:**

- I'm sorry you've been feeling so awful. I'm so glad you're still here.
- I'm here for you. Remember that you can always talk to me if you need to.
- I want to help you. Tell me what I can do to support you.

If the person is comfortable and ready to talk with you about a safety plan, commit yourself to what you can realistically and reliably do. Consider and talk with your friend or family member about other people or professionals they may feel comfortable involving in their support.

## You can also support your friend or family member to keep safe by:

- Not rushing to talk about suicide or what happened;
- When it is talked about, don't be afraid that it will again put thoughts in the person's mind about suicide;
- Not judging or trying to analyse what happened and why;
- Helping manage their environment, keep it safe and free from things that could be used to cause harm;
- Supporting healthy sleep patterns;
- Helping out by cooking some healthy meals; and/or
- Offer to go for a walk with your family member or friend, or invite them to do an activity that has made them feel good in the past.

## Practical things that can be done

There are some practical things that can be done in the days after an attempt, to support your friend or family member:

- Make the environment safe and free from things that could be harmful, such as, removing objects or restricting access to things that could be used to end their life.
- While it may feel hard for both you and your friend or family member to sleep, a decent amount of rest and sleep can help with thinking and working through the event.

- Make sure both you and the person you are supporting are eating healthy and wholesome food.
- Connect with positive and trusted people who contribute to good feelings about life for yourself or the person you are supporting.
- Limit the use of alcohol and drugs, or don't have any at all if possible.

It might also be helpful to reflect with your family member or friend on reasons to live and write these down. This will be unique to every individual, but some things may be family, children, friends or a pet. It could also be something the person you are supporting is passionate about doing, like work, being creative or being a part of a group or network.

## Unhelpful responses include:

- **Panicking:** "This can't be happening. I don't know what to do - what do we do?"
- **Name-calling:** "You're a real psycho."
- **Criticising:** "That was such a stupid thing to do."
- **Preaching or lecturing:** "You know you shouldn't have done that; you should've asked for help."
- **Ignoring:** "If I just pretend this didn't happen, it'll go away."
- **Abandoning the person:** "I can't take this, I have to leave."
- **Punishing the person:** "I'm not talking to them until they straighten themselves out."
- **Dramatising:** "This is the worst possible thing you could have done!"
- **Simplifying things or using a 'quick-fix' approach:** "You just need some medication, and then you'll feel yourself again."
- **Being angry or offended:** "I can't believe you'd try that!"
- **Making the person feel guilty or selfish:** "How did you think this would make me feel?"

# If thoughts of suicide come back

If thoughts of suicide return, it is important to be prepared and have a safety plan. This could be something that you help your friend or family member to put together, or you could encourage them to develop one with a health professional or a GP. Some websites listed at the end of this booklet have online tools to develop a safety plan if this is what your friend or family member prefers.

It is important that your friend or family member shares their safety plan with people they trust - like a friend, family member or a key support person - as they can be helpful in implementing the plan.

## Some key things that would be useful in a safety plan are:

- Phone numbers of people to call, remembering, if it is life threatening or you do not feel you can keep the person you are supporting safe, call 000.
- For non-life threatening support, consider some of the 24/7 operated services listed in the back of this booklet.
- Tell a friend or family member.
- Make an appointment with your professional support person: counsellor, psychologist, GP etc.
- Life-affirming and enjoyable activities.

## In an emergency

### If you are concerned about the person you are supporting:

- Call 000 and ask for an ambulance. Stay on the line, speak clearly, and be ready to answer the operator's questions.
- Visit your local hospital's emergency department.



**If you need to talk to someone at any time of the day or night, we recommend the following services:**

- **Lifeline** 13 11 14  
0477 13 11 14 (Lifeline Text 6pm to midnight)
- **Suicide Call Back Service** 1300 659 467
- **Kids Helpline** 1800 55 1800
- **Mental Health Services Helpline** 1800 332 388
- **Beyond Blue** 1300 22 4636

## Helpful websites

### **lifeline.org.au**

- Online practical tools; safety
- Phone number to talk with people 24/7
- Information about feeling suicidal
- Resources about other life issues
- Online chat available from 7pm to midnight

### **suicidecallbackservice.org.au**

- Online practical tools; safety
- Phone number to talk with people 24/7
- Information about feeling suicidal
- Information about supporting a friend feeling suicidal

### **beyondblue.org.au**

- Many resources and information suitable for all people
- Phone number to talk with people 24/7

### **blackdoginstitute.org.au**

- Information and fact sheets about suicide and other mental health issues
- Research and clinical resources
- Toolkits and resources

# Services and supports in your local area

## Statewide

### Anglicare - Attempted Suicide Aftercare Program (ASAP)

- Outreach support for people following a suicide attempt, and for family members or friends of people who have attempted suicide
- Assessment, safety planning and psychosocial support
- **Phone:** 1800 243 232
- **Email:** ASAP@anglicare-tas.org.au

### Rural Alive and Well

- Rural Alive and Well Inc (RAW) is a not-for-profit organisation delivering suicide prevention, intervention and community wellbeing services
- **Phone:** 1300 HELP MATE (1300 4357 6283)
- **Website:** rawtas.com.au
- **Email:** admin@rawtas.com.au

## South

### Headspace Hobart (for those aged 12-25 years)

- Whether you're seeing one of the doctors, health workers or mental health professionals - all headspace staff are experts at working with young people
- 49 Liverpool Street, Hobart, Tasmania 7000
- **Phone:** (03) 6231 2927
- **Fax:** (03) 6231 3908
- **Email:** headspace@thelink.org.au

## North

### Headspace Launceston (for those aged 12-25 years)

- Whether you're seeing one of the doctors, health workers or mental health professionals - all headspace staff are experts at working with young people
- Corner of Brisbane and Wellington Street,  
186 Brisbane Street, Launceston, Tasmania 7250
- **Phone:** (03) 6335 3100
- **Fax:** (03) 6335 3127
- **Email:** [headspace@csys.com.au](mailto:headspace@csys.com.au)

## North-West

### Headspace Devonport (for those aged 12-25 years)

- Whether you're seeing one of the doctors, health workers or mental health professionals - all headspace staff are experts at working with young people
- Level 1, 33-35 Steele St, Devonport, Tasmania 7310
- **Phone:** (03) 6424 2144
- **Email:** [headspace@csys.com.au](mailto:headspace@csys.com.au)



# Safety plan

Reminder Suicide Safety Plan App





The ASAP service is supported by the Crown  
through the Department of Health Tasmania

SUPPORTED BY



Tasmanian  
Government



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