SUICIDE

A self-inflicted death in which one makes an intentional, direct, and conscious effort to end one’s life.

A suicide attempt is where somebody makes an unsuccessful attempt at taking their own life.

Suicide is one of the leading causes of death in the world.

It is estimated that 50% of those that suffer from severe depression commit suicide. It can be difficult to obtain accurate figures on suicide rates, and many investigators believe that estimates are often low. The rates of suicide attempts are much higher.

Many “accidents” may be intentional deaths, and since suicide is frowned upon in our society, family and friends often refuse to acknowledge that loved ones have taken their own lives.

There is a difference in rates depending on the country, race, religious devoutness, occupations, social support levels, marital status, age, and gender.

The rate of suicide in men is much higher than in women, whereas the rate of suicide attempts is higher in women than in men.

- Suicide is one of the biggest killers in young men under 35 in the UK
- Each year, over 1700 young men commit suicide
- Men are at 3-4 times greater risk of suicide than women

Most men that take their lives are not in contact with any other agency and may not have told anybody about their low mood.

Mood & Thought Changes
- Suicide attempts usually go hand-in-hand with psychological disorders, esp. major depressive disorder, schizophrenia & alcohol use disorder
- Many attempts are preceded by changes in mood
  - Changes may not be enough to warrant a diagnosis of a mental disorder
  - Most common change is rise in sadness, but increases in feelings of hopelessness, anxiety, tension, frustration, anger, or shame are also common
- May also be preceded by shifts in patterns of thinking
  - May become preoccupied, lose perspective, and see suicide as the only effective solution to their difficulties
  - Often develop a sense of hopelessness – a pessimistic belief that their present circumstances, problems, or mood will not change
  - Indicator of suicidal intent

Common Triggers
- Suicidal acts may be connected to recent events or current conditions in a person’s life
  - May not be the basic motivation for the suicide but can precipitate it
- Common triggers: stressful events, mood and thought changes, alcohol and other drug use, mental disorders, and modelling
  - Immediate stressors: e.g. death of a loved one, loss of job, natural disaster
  - Long-term stressors: e.g. serious illness, social isolation, occupational stress, abusive environments
  - Up to 70% of the people who attempt suicide drink alcohol just before the act