

Autism & Suicide

This factsheet is for:

- Neurodivergent adults
- Parents & Carers and
- Professionals



Summary:

Autistic people can be at increased risk of suicide for a variety of reasons. Always seek immediate help if someone is in danger from suicide. A good friend and acceptance can make a huge difference and help prevent suicidal thoughts.

More detail:

Suicide is the deliberate act of ending your own life. Suicidal feelings include thoughts that death is the only way out of a situation or that you have nothing to live for.

If you feel suicidal and unable to cope, you should seek immediate help from a medical professional or by dialling the emergency services.

Autistic people are more likely than others to have suicidal thoughts for a variety of reasons:

1. **Mental Health:** Autistic people are at increased risk of mental illness, including depression and anxiety as a result of struggling to live and be accepted in a neurotypical world. The effort of masking autistic traits and not understanding why they seem to experience things so differently from others can be a huge strain. Undiagnosed autistic people can be at particular risk in this respect as they have even less comprehension of why the world seems so strange to them.
2. **Bullying:** Autistic people may also have been abused or bullied for being different, may have money issues and struggle to find employment, or have harmed their own health in response to other problems.
3. **Loneliness:** Autistic people can also struggle to make and keep friends due to struggles with social skills, which can cause isolation and loneliness. When others may find comfort in sharing problems or worries with friends, autistic people may have fewer or no outlets for this.
4. **Emotions:** Many autistic people find it hard to understand and manage their own emotions. This too can lead to suicidal thoughts, especially when combined with other issues previously described.

How can you help? While not every autistic person will have suicidal thoughts by any means, it is important to recognise the possibility and try to help and support someone before they reach this stage. Many autistic people find life extremely difficult even if they pretend otherwise, and someone that accepts them as they truly are and listens to their voice can make a huge difference. Always seek immediate help if someone is at risk of harm from suicidal thoughts, including yourself.