



SUPPORTING A COMPANION WHO MAY BE SUICIDAL

If there is immediate danger

If a companion is harming themselves or someone else, or you believe harm is about to occur, call Triple Zero (000). Stay with the companion if it is safe to do so.

Your role as a member

Your role is to be present, listen with care and help the companion connect with appropriate support. You are not expected to diagnose, counsel or manage the situation on your own.

- Stay calm and speak in a warm, respectful way.
- Take what the companion says seriously.
- Ask clearly about suicide and immediate safety.
- Contact emergency or mental health support when needed.
- Seek support for yourself after the situation.

A helpful reminder

Asking someone directly about suicide does not put the idea in their mind. It gives them an opportunity to talk and shows that you care.

What suicidal thoughts may look like

Suicidal thoughts can range from feeling that life is not worth living to having a specific plan to end one's life. Any disclosure should be met with care and taken seriously.

What to do in the moment

1. Connect

Pause other tasks. Give the companion your attention. Use a calm, genuine and non-judgemental approach.

2. Ask directly	You can say: “Sometimes when people are feeling overwhelmed, they think about suicide. Are you having thoughts of suicide?”
3. Listen	Allow the companion to speak in their own words. Do not rush to solve the problem. Acknowledge what they are sharing.
4. Check immediate safety	Ask simple, direct questions about whether they have a plan, whether they have taken any steps to act, and whether they have access to a way to harm themselves.
5. Connect with support	Ask who supports them, such as family, friends, a GP, counsellor or another service. Ask what would help right now.
6. Act on urgent risk	If harm is occurring or appears imminent, call 000. For ACT mental health support, call Access Mental Health on 1800 629 354 or 02 6205 1065.

Words you can use

- “Thank you for telling me. I’m glad you said something.”
- “I’m here with you, and we can look at the next step together.”
- “I’m concerned for your safety. I would like us to call Access Mental Health together.”
- “Who is someone you trust that we could contact with you?”

What to avoid

- Judgement, blame, shame or debating whether their feelings are reasonable.
- Minimising what they have said, for example, “You’ll be fine” or “Others have it worse”.
- Taking sole responsibility for keeping the companion safe. Involve emergency or professional support.

After the immediate situation

Support the companion

- Encourage them to reconnect with supports they already know, such as their GP, counsellor, family, friends or other services.
- Where appropriate, help make a warm connection to a support service rather than simply giving a phone number.

Record what happened

- Complete a factual, chronological case note in the companion's CDS profile under the Client Event tab.
- Record what was said or observed, the questions asked, who was contacted and what actions were taken.
- Avoid assumptions, labels or personal judgements.
- Complete an Incident Report and email it to conferences@vinnies-cg.org.au.

Look after yourself and your fellow members

Supporting someone in distress can affect you. Taking time to debrief and seek support is part of safe member practice.

- Speak with your Conference President, Conference Support Supervisor or a Conference Support staff member.
- Arrange for another member to take over visits if you need a break.
- Use the Employee Assistance Program through CatholicCare. This free and confidential service is available to members, volunteers and employees on 02 6162 6100.

Before you finish

Check that the companion is connected with the agreed support, complete the required records, and make sure you and the other member have an opportunity to debrief.

Quick decision guide

What you notice	Member response	Who to contact
Immediate danger	Call 000. Stay with the companion if safe.	Triple Zero 000

Suicidal thoughts or serious concern	Ask directly, listen, check immediate safety and call for professional advice.	Access Mental Health 1800 629 354 02 6205 1065
Distressed but no immediate danger identified	Listen, ask what would help and support connection with existing services.	GP, counsellor, support service or trusted person
After any serious incident	Complete CDS notes, Incident Report and member debrief.	Conference Support conferences@vinnies-cg.org.au

Contacts and resources

Emergency Triple Zero (000)

If there is immediate danger or harm is occurring.

Access Mental Health (ACT) 1800 629 354 or 02 6205 1065

24-hour mental health information, assessment and referral.

Mental Health Line (NSW) 1800 011 511

24-hour mental health information, assessment and referral.

Lifeline 13 11 14

24-hour crisis support.

Suicide Call Back Service 1300 659 467

24-hour counselling for people affected by suicide.

Beyond Blue 1300 22 4636

Mental health information and support.

Medicare Mental Health 1800 595 212

Mental health support and service navigation.

CatholicCare EAP 02 6162 6100

Free, voluntary and confidential support for members, volunteers and employees.

Conference Support conferences@vinnies-cg.org.au

Advice, debriefing and incident reporting.

Useful online resources

- [ACT Government mental health support](#)
- [Access Mental Health](#)
- [Lifeline Australia](#)
- [Suicide Call Back Service](#)
- [Beyond Blue](#)
- [Support After Suicide](#)
- [CatholicCare Employee Assistance Program](#)

Incident report form

Use the current approved Incident/Near Miss/Hazard Report Form on [MemberConnect](#).



St Vincent de Paul Society

CANBERRA/GOULBURN

good works

Completed forms must be sent to the relevant Manager or Director and Safety@vinnies-cg.org.au

We love feedback! Please send feedback on this form to Safety@vinnies-cg.org.au

INCIDENT/NEAR MISS/HAZARD REPORT FORM

☒ Incident	☐ Near Miss	☐ Hazard	Emergency Services ☐	Police Incident #	
Time		Date		Location	
What Happened? (Include names, injuries, and any other details)					
What Follow-up Has There Been? (include cleaning, first aid, debrief, new risk controls, etc)					
Contributing Factors- Why Did it Happen? (if known)					
Witnesses (if any)					
Name		Role			
Name		Role			
Who is Completing this Form?					
Name		Role			
Phone/Email		Time & Date			

*If there has been a serious injury or dangerous incident, as soon as everyone is safe you **must** escalate the incident report by calling your Supervisor or the WHS Coordinator as appropriate.*

PEOPLE AND CULTURE USE ONLY

Risk Identified in Register ☐					
Incident is Notifiable		Regulator Notified		CEO Notified	
Worker Injured		Insurer Notified		Claim #	
Additional Notes					
Actions Required					
Responsible Person		Due Date		Completed	
Signed		Role		Date	

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