### Key Facts about Suicide
- All groups in society experience loss through suicide
- There is no single cause for suicide
- Anyone of us could potentially become suicidal
- Please encourage people to avoid phrases such as ‘Commit suicide’. Suicide was decriminalised in 1962 in Northern Ireland and 1993 in the Republic of Ireland, so it’s stigmatising to talk about ‘committing suicide’ – the only other context in which the word ‘commit’ is used is when associated with crime. The alternative is ‘Die by suicide’ ‘A suicide attempt’ ‘Take his/her life’ & ‘Completed suicide’

### What Are The Warning Signs of Suicide?
Most people who feel suicidal don’t really want to die, they just want an end to their pain. These are some of the signs which may indicate that someone is thinking of taking their life: **Note: Some of these warning signs and risk factors can be associated with everyday behaviour. You should look at the overall picture for the person you are concerned about. However, the more warning signs and risk factors, the higher the possible risk.**

- A suicide attempt or act of self-harm
- Expressing suicidal thoughts
- Preoccupation with death
- Depression
- Becoming isolated
- Alcohol abuse
- Drug abuse
- Sudden changes in mood or behaviour
- Making ‘final’ arrangements, e.g. giving away possessions (such as books, CDs, DVDs)

### How to Respond
If you are concerned about someone you can follow these three steps:

1. **Show You Care**
   Offer support and let them know you care. Say something like:
   - ‘I’m worried about you and I want to help’
   - ‘Whatever’s bothering you we will get through this together’

2. **Ask the Question**
   Don’t be afraid to discuss suicide – asking about it won’t put the idea in people’s heads:
   - ‘Do you feel like harming yourself?’
   - ‘Do you feel like ending your life?’

3. **Call for Help**
   Encourage them to look for help:
   - ‘Let’s talk to someone who can help’
   - ‘I will stay with you until you get help’
   - ‘You’re not alone and there are people who can help you’

### Self-Harm

**What is self-harm?**
Cutting and burning are the most common forms of self-harm, but it also includes scratching, head banging, poisoning, skin picking, bone breaking, hair pulling, interfering with wound healing, asphyxiation and biting.

**Why do people self-harm?**
- The most common reason given by people who self-harm is that they are releasing tension. Self-harm can actually be a means of survival – the best way of coping with overwhelming psychological pain, and communicating it to others. It may reflect difficulties in the relationships between them and others.

**How can we help those who Self Harm?**
- If someone you know is self-harming, the first thing to do is to ensure that they are safe. Either tend to the injury or help them to do so. If it is serious, or you do not know what to do, then contact a nurse or doctor for help or advice. Next, listen, be understanding and try not to be angry.
- Some people who self-harm might find it useful to talk – unfortunately, secrecy and shame can surround self-harm. Some labels applied to people who self-harm, such as ‘attention-seeker’ or ‘manipulative’, are not helpful. They simply add to the stigma of self-harm and may prevent some from coming forward. If you are affected by self-harm or know of someone who is, you can contact one of the sources below.
- Family and friends can be an invaluable source of support. Self-harmers often report that the sympathy, tolerance and respect of those close to them is integral to getting their self-harm under control. Family and friends also need support and understanding themselves.
- Self-harmers need to learn a different means of expressing emotion.
  - All acts of self-harm should be taken seriously
  - Self-harm is a communication of intense distress
  - Both males and females self-harm
  - It is a particular problem for young people but can affect all age groups

**If you, or someone you know, is in crisis now and need someone to talk to:**
- **Contact ‘LIFELINE’ all age groups - 0808 808 8000**
- **Contact Samaritans 08457 909090**
- **Contact your local doctor or GP out-of-hours service 08705329024**
- **ZEST – Passion for Life, Healing the Hurt of Self Harm & Suicide 02871266999**
- **CRUSE Bereavement Care Young Persons Helpline 0808 808 1677**
- **CRUSE Bereavement Care Helpline 0844 477 9400**
- **Visit the ‘Minding your head’ website at www.mindingyourhead.info**
- **Visit www.help4kids.co.uk**