# Suicide myths.

Please carefully consider your needs when reading information about suicide.  If you need assistance, please contact a [crisis service](https://www.lifeinmindaustralia.com.au/communities/in-a-crisis).

Suicide is a complex issue. There are many commonly held myths about suicide that sometimes make it difficult for people to recognise when someone is at risk or when people may need more support.

Myths and misinformation can increase the stigma, shame and guilt experienced by people who are thinking about or have attempted to take their own life.

In addition, it is not easy to understand what compels a person to take their own life, especially for those who have never experienced such overwhelming and negative feelings.

Here are some of the myths and facts to better understand suicide:

## Myth 1. Everyone who engages in suicidal behaviour has a mental illness.

Fact. Thoughts of suicide can happen to anyone, including those who have no history of mental illness. People living with mental illness are, however, at increased risk of suicide.

## Myth 2. Asking someone if they are suicidal puts 'ideas' in their head.

Fact. Experts generally agree that asking is unlikely to make the situation worse. One of the only ways to really know if a person is contemplating suicide is to ask. Asking someone if they are feeling suicidal may seem difficult, but it shows that you care.

Myth 3. People who talk about suicide are just attention seeking.

Fact. People who talk about suicide are often thinking about taking their own life. Talking about suicide may be a way to indicate they need support so it needs to be taken seriously.

## Myth 4. People who think about suicide are weak or selfish.

Fact. Anyone who thinks about suicide is experiencing intense and overwhelming negative feelings and cannot see any other solution – they need support, not judgement.

## Myth 5. It is impossible to stop suicide.

Fact. Suicide is not inevitable and may be prevented.

## Myth 6. Someone who has attempted suicide will never try again.

Fact. A previous suicide attempt is a recognised risk factor and will increase with each subsequent attempt.