



Young People Speak The Unspeakable “Suicide”

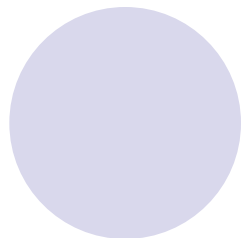
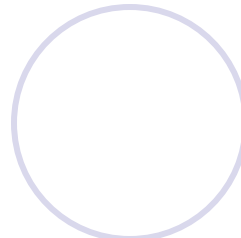
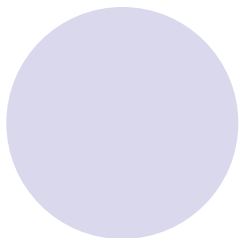
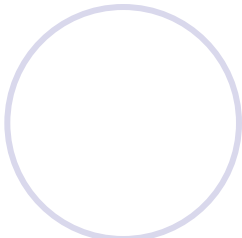
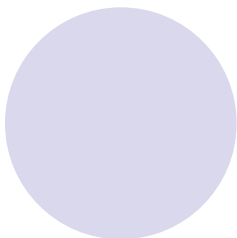
“Life Can Hit Hard AND Early”

Sally Evans CTA, UKCP
Counselling Manager – Xenzone
www:kooth.com

What is Kooth?



- Award winning online counselling and advice service
- 11 – 25 years of age
- Free, Anonymous, Confidential
- Located in 14 Local Authorities and growing
- Supported by in-house technical team
- Organisational Member of BACP and member of CYP Division



Log-out

HIDE THIS PAGE



Talk To a Counsellor



We provide counselling using chat or kooth mail

Both are private and secure.

Go to the [counselling](#) page

Member for 289 days



Logged in at 8:51 AM

Welcome to KOOOTH sally

Services in Your Area

[Links to other sources of help](#)



Have Your Say

Share with others:

[Message boards](#)
[Blog](#)
[Magazine](#)

Check your [mail\[0\]](#)

Latest News

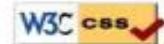
STAGE AND SCREEN SUCCESS FOR...

A TALENTED eight-year-old from Pendle is appearing in front of sell-out crowds in Les Miser...

[Continued...](#)



KOOTH info



a-squared



a-square detected the suspicious

How Do We Work?



- Offer chat sessions - Synchronous
 - drop-in or booked
 - one off or ongoing
- Message system - Asynchronous
- Moderated
 - MessageBoards
 - Blogs
 - Magazine
- Multi Agency Working – Localised in area



Kooth Counselling Team

- Between January 2009 and December 2009, Kooth counsellors dealt with 121 serious incidents involving “suicide”
- Young people who either wanted to kill themselves or had attempted recently or in the past
- Many were talking for the first time



Suicide and Young People...

- Suicide rates in those aged 10-19 in the UK declined by 28% in the period 1997-2003, accounted for 4% of all deaths in age group
- More young women than young men attempt suicide, although more young men are likely to die as a result of a suicide attempt, ratio of 3:1
- Most common methods of suicide are hanging for young men and self-poisoning for young women



....Suicide and Young People

- Suicide is the fourth biggest killer in young men and the third biggest killer in young women (15-19)
- Only 14% of young people who committed suicide between 1997-2003 were in contact with “traditional” mental health services in the year prior to the death

Manchester University 2008

- Total number of UK deaths by suicide for age groups 5-24 years was 379. 319 young men and 74 young women, increased ratio

WHO 2007

Risk Factors

The title 'Risk Factors' is positioned at the top left. To its right, there are five circles arranged horizontally. The first circle is solid light purple. The second circle is white with a light purple outline. The third circle is solid light purple. The fourth circle is white with a light purple outline. The fifth circle is solid light purple.

- Previous history of suicide behaviour
- Depression and/or alcohol or substance abuse
- Family history of mental disorders, substance abuse or suicide
- Physical, sexual, emotional abuse
- Stressful situation of loss, current life stressors
- Personal exposure to other teenagers who have died by suicide or exposure through sensationalized media coverage
- Pressure to conform or succeed
- Young LGBT people
- Having access to the lethal means for suicide

Understanding Suicide

- “...our best route to understanding suicide is not through the study of the structure of the brain, not the study of social statistics, not the study of mental diseases, but directly through the study of human emotions described...in the words of the suicidal person. The most important question to a potentially suicidal person is not an inquiry about family history or laboratory test of blood or span fluid, but *“where do you hurt?”* and *“how can I help you?”*”

Shneidman, 1998

Log-out

HIDE THIS PAGE



Our boards are moderated

Please don't:

- swear
- be a bully
- give out phone numbers
- or addresses
- or email details

See our

[terms of use](#)

boards>Year 10 and 11>Myself>Help with my Studies?????????

POSTREPLY: Add to 'My Boards'

30 posts - Page 1 of 2 - 1 2

Help with my Studies?????????

By [sally](#) on 05th Jan 2010

Hi I'm Sally and I manage the counsellors here on Kooth. I've just started a course and for it I have to do a piece of research. The research I'm interested in is young peoples' experience of talking online to counsellors and whether young people prefer talking online rather than face to face. I'm particularly interested in talking about suicide online as I know this is often one of the hardest things to talk about and wonder if it is easier online and if so why??

So why the post? Well I'm wondering if anyone out there would be interested in chatting to me. We could either do it in this thread or we could set up a private chat or messages. I'm happy with either. I wouldn't need to know contact details, so nobody would know who you were.

If anyone is interested or wants more info, please just message me.

Thanks in advance

Sally



[sally](#)
Moderator
Posts: 38

Help with my Studies?????????

By [liffey123](#) on 05th Jan 2010

hi, i definatley prefer talking to counsellors online and thats because they actually giv u advice on what to do and my school counsellor always asks me how i feel about everything and thats basically it! ive recently tried committing suicide and i wud find it difficult telling a counsellor face to face because then they know who i am and counsellors on here dont know who u r. i realllly need help because i do want to kill myself and theres also reasons y i dont



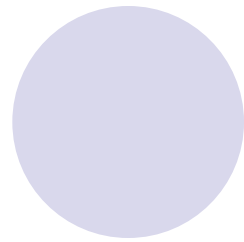
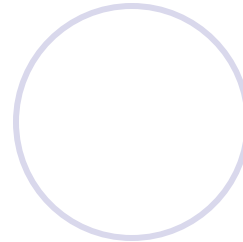
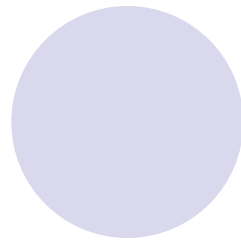
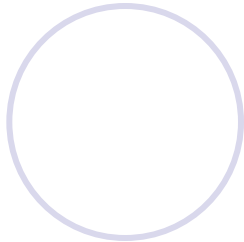
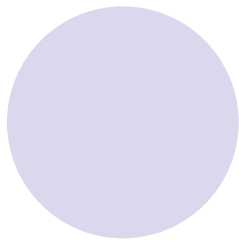
[liffey123](#)
Cheshire
Posts: 65
Joined 23rd Oct 2009

Liffey123 xxx

Help with my Studies?????????

By [sally](#) on 07th Jan 2010





Kooth Cardiff - Mozilla Firefox

File Edit View History Bookmarks Tools Help

https://www.kooth.com/members/magazine.php

Basecamp Kooth Kooth Admin xenzone SpeedGuide Xenzone's Internal Co... Mozilla Firefox Start P...

Kooth Cardiff

KOOTH.com
Free online advice for young people

home counselling boards mag blog my kooth news plus about

magazine my mag Cardiff

WELCOME TO THE KOOTH MAGAZINE - 04 February 2010

Log-out



Top Rated

Relationships

Family & Friends

Emotions

Work & Money

Health

Sexual Health

Domestic Violence

Self Harm

Drugs & Alcohol

Staying Safe

Write an Article

Can you help?...



Hi I'm Sally and I manage the counsellors here on Kooth.

I've just started a course and for it I have to do a piece of research. The research I'm interested in is young peoples' experience of talking online to counsellors and whether young people prefer talking online rather than face to face. I'm particularly interested in talking about suicide online as I know this is often one of the hardest things to talk about and wonder if it is...

[Continued ...](#)

Speak out about abuse...



Hello I am writing this to tell all sorts of people to not be afraid. If you have experienced sexual abuse it doesn't matter how long ago it was! All you need to remember is, they could be doing it to other people, there is 65% of this world that don't speak out, if you live with it for a long time like I did then it can cause you to have . BREAK DOWN'S. HEALTH PROBLEMS. NOT ABLE TO TRUST...

[Continued ...](#)

Abuse, alcoholic-drug addict, mum, little brother and...



Well i've had a happy life, right up until the day my dad left.. My life became a misery; I shut myself out from the world. I

Done

start Skype™ - sally.xenz... Windows Explorer Microsoft PowerPoin... Inbox - Microsoft O... Firefox 12:37

Respondents



- Posts had a total of 17 views in the younger 7,8,9 board, 123 views in the year 10,11 and 159 in the older board
- 17 young women and 6 young men replied
- Most respondents fall between the 15-17 age group
- Youngest respondent was 14, oldest 23

Preference for online

- “I’m not sure wat wud b worse than talking about wanting to kill myself but if I do kill myself then there's nothing else to talk about” littleone123, 15
- “...its just easier to reveal how broken you can be to someone who can't see you...saying you can't take life...I see as kind of giving up.....echo relection,16
- “yes I have felt suicidal. When you feel it's too much... I don't want to die , but I'm so tired of living....People say ...you're 16, what have you go to worry about!? What some adults don't realist is that life can hit hard AND early...” echo reflection, 16

Preference for online



- “When you feel like you want to do suicide your not thinking about the long run...you need to concentrate on the short term stuff to keep yourself going and in the short term it really helps to have someone there talking to you...Vibrant, 18
- “It is definitely easier to say online how you truly feel...” princess94, 16

Anonymity



- “..online, I feel more confident in saying how i truly feel, and I can say ALL that’s going on with me...Anonymity is the best thing on the site. In online counselling all together.” echo reflection, 16
- “I have spent a lot of time talking online when I have felt suicidal... because it is easier to hide your expressions and emotions....a simple look can give so much away, and that is what I like about the anonymity of online counselling....” pussycatdoll, 18

Safe, Private and Accessible Environment

- “I can have a talk when I feel I need it.....i have been involved with CAMHS before....they only talked to my mum...that was pointless because she ain't me” tiny luv, 15
- “.. Allows for thinking time between writing so you can think about what you actually mean to say and phrase it in a way the counsellor will understand” Katiiee, 17

Control – affect and relationship

- “ ..don't like people seeing my cry” Colours,16
- “ I did talk face to face with someone...I began telling them that I wanted to overdose, they finished the sentence off for me....” ticktac, 16
- “ ...if I spoke face to face to someone about some of the stuff, well I'd probably just keel over with embarrassments, nerves, tears you name it!” echo refection, 16
- “....whereas online it kinda feels like youre talking to the computer...” primarytimer123, 17

Control – affect and relationship

- “...watching their face as they take in what you say is what I like not seeing. Shadowland, 17
- know you, then they won't judge you (hopefully) and they won't worry about you therefore there are fewer feelings of guilt concerning the subject.....” ticktac,16
- “..online it feels safer and if you feel worried or upset or anything you can just close down the computer really quick and make the person go away ...online you can be more in control and its less scary and easier to use and its more private as well” JAir, 16

Control – affect & relationship

- “..most of us talk to friends online everyday, it’s part of our lives, so even when chatting to a counsoler online, we’re not completely out of our comfort zone” Floyd09, 17
- “If you are talking to someone who doesn’t If its’ not something you like to hear, its okay to react whereas f2f...you can’t help but react...with more graphic things you don’t see things like... disgust or anger towards your story.. that helps me a lot... I would rather not be shown such raw emotion with ...sensitive topics” echo reflection, 16

Relief and Gratitude



- “.online I do feel better after talking, because that’s the only place I touch on such sensitive topics..” echo reflection, 16
- “...once the problem is dealt with they store your past problems in a jar that’ll be cealed forever” melodyfan94,16
- “Just talking to a counsellor can be a huge weight off your mind.....” Floyd09, 17
- What better confidence does it give? LOADS!” echo reflection, 16

Confidentiality & Confidential Space

- “... online there is more confidentiality therefore more freedom to say what you want to say and not feel terrible about it. You can be honest” ticktac, 16
- “I’d probably want a guarantee that no matter what we talk about, it stays between us and only us...no counsellors in world would offer...therefore I probably wouldn’t go through with it” Floyd09, 17

Confidentiality & Confidential Space

- “...when I mentioned it to my school counsellor she informed me that she would have to tell my mum and I had to persuade her into thinking I would never do it”
echo reflection, 16
- “I feel ashamed or embarrassed.....is harder by the fact you don't know what the outcome will be. There is always that fear they'll “refer” you to someone, put you on suicide watch or even section you. This isn't a problem when talking online anonymously – the counsellors can't “get you” and you feel safer knowing that no matter what your problems are, no official action can be taken” Floyd09, 17

Child Protection



- “I can imagine that sometimes listening isn’t enough and yeah I can understand that sometimes you have to do something to keep people safe...you should because its important and it can be dangerous”

JAir, 16



Language

- Difference between online and face2face
- “...wanting to kill myself..”
- “...I have felt suicidal...”
- “...want to do suicide..”
- Is there such a thing as the Unspeakable online?



Those that will and those that wont

- Split regarding the “presentation” of young people online
- Related to clinical diagnosis? Desired outcome?
- Counsellor required to ‘be’ or to ‘do’?
- Clinical considerations – anonymity, confidentiality, age and rupture to therapeutic relationship



Young People Speaking The Unspeakable?

- Online Disinhibition Effect?
- Personality?
- “Normal” adolescent development?
- Mental health distress?



Ethical Considerations

- Suicide Act 1961, section 2
- Child Protection, concept of “significant harm”
- Confidentiality and the breaching of
- Children’s Act 2004, contracted service
- Gillick Competency
- Mental Capacity Act 2005 (Adults with Incapacity Act 2000- Scotland)



Counsellors Speaking the Unspeakable

- One approach doesn't fit all, respect the emotional language of young people and respond accordingly
- Suicide 'talk' can feel like an attack – and sometimes it might be – need to support ourselves in moving beyond that and engaging with the vulnerability
- Asking questions can feel clumsy, fear might provoke a greater degree of risk, encourage young people to think the unthinkable – it won't! Will very probably reduce suicide potential
- Our willingness to talk about suicide communicates our willingness to hear it and this will communicate itself to the young person

Counsellor speaking the Unspeakable

- Think about your own position re suicide – how your own views are shaped by factors such as faith, personal experience, news, politics
- Consider your own counter-transference - how that will silence you in ways you did not or could not imagine
- Thinking about suicide can make us feel fearful, angry, impotent, exhausted, depleted can leave us feeling traumatised (vicarious) “chaos is draining” – find ways to self support
- Know the risk factors and use them to help structure your thinking and the dialogue you enter into, HOWEVER you are the resource: the quality of the relationship and how you can connect
- Only go for contact details and referral on to other services if absolutely necessary. Breathe, deep and often

Where do you hurt? How can I help?

- Establish rapport

- In crisis use 'grounding' techniques: basic breathing techniques/noticing support/establishing contact & encourage more
- When not in crisis: empathy, respect, equality

- Explore

- Nature of thought, how they understand their problem
- Ask questions, who, why, when, tell me more

Where do you hurt? How can I help?

- Focus

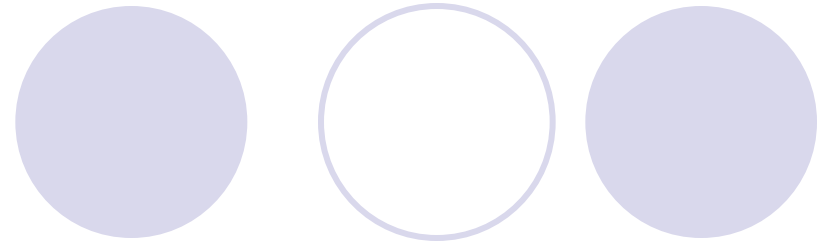
- Focus thinking & feeling, here & now, “short term”
- “What you need right now”, “what can we put in place to help you feel safer”

- Options and Action Plan

- Crisis contact information – Samaritans etc, strategies for diversion, ongoing support plan, what happens now/what happens next



Counsellor care



- Working with colleagues - Team meetings, peer support, skype
- Case loads, balance, rota, primary counsellor
- Supervision - external and internal
- Fun, food, lol!



Organisational Responsibility

- Clear Policies and Procedures - Confidentiality and Child Protection
- Clear lines of accountability
- Clear referral pathways into secondary and/or psychiatric services
- Training – knowledge is power



Thank you

sally@xenzone.com

If you would like a copy of this presentation, please download from

www.xenzone.com/knowledge