Many people take an overdose because of an emotional turmoil and they may be trying to communicate their pain and frustration through the act of overdosing.

It is difficult to say why people kill themselves, or why some people feel less able to cope than others do. When a relationship ends, most people are upset, but they don’t automatically reach for a packet of tablets. Experts point to a number of ‘vulnerability factors’ – like someone very close to you dying, or your parents splitting up; and ‘precipitating factors’ – such as a row with your partner or loosing your job. Any one of these may spark thoughts of suicide if you are feeling particularly low.

You may continue to feel depressed or anxious or tearful or frightened whilst you are in hospital -–these feelings are very common and are a reflection of how low your self-esteem can become, as well as trying to come-to-terms with the stressful event of being in hospital.

Once the medical and nursing staff have assessed what is the most appropriate treatment for you, you will be offered the chance to talk about your problems and what things may have led up to the overdose. This will be with a nurse or doctor specially trained in mental health and it will enable us to identify, with you, what help and support you may need after you leave hospital. Some options may include counselling, specific follow-up with your GP, befriending, couples therapy or a further assessment meeting with a specialist professional such as a community psychiatric nurse (CPN) or a clinical psychologist.

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| Counselling Services  * **The Samaritans 🕿 01793 537373 or 08457 90 90 90 (local call rate)** [www.samaritans.org.uk](http://www.samaritans.org.uk)   A confidential telephone support and listening service for people feeling depressed or suicidal. Operates 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. If you would like to talk to someone face-to-face, please call the centre to check opening times – no appointment required. Address: 6 Curtis Street, Swindon, SN1 5JU   * **Swindon Counselling Service 🕿 01793 514550**   Confidential individual and group counselling for adults who are finding difficulties in coping with their lives. To arrange an initial appointment please ring the above number or write to:  23 Bath Road, Swindon, SN1 4AS.   * **MIND in Western Wiltshire 🕿 01249 814447**   Confidential counselling and support group. Covers Bradford-on-Avon, Calne, Chippenham, Corsham, Devizes, Malmesbury, Melksham, Trowbridge, Warminster and Westbury.  Ring the above number to arrange an appointment or write to:  MIND in Western Wiltshire, 22 High Street, Calne, SN11 0BS.   * **Relate 🕿 01793 527664** [www.relate.org.uk](http://www.relate.org.uk)   Confidential counselling for adult couples and individuals with relationship problems including sexual therapy. Daytime and evening appointments available. Ring the above number to make an appointment or write to:  Friends Meeting House, 7-9 Eascotte Hill, Swindon, SN1 3JF.   * **Connections Youth Counselling Service 🕿 01793 695255**   Confidential and free advice and counselling for young people (14 – 25 years).  To speak to a counsellor or make an appointment please call in or ring the above helpline number. 178 Victoria Road, Swindon, SN1 3DF.   * **Druglink 🕿 01793 610133**   Advice, support, information and counselling on all drug-related problems.  Ring the above number for more information, or write to: 47 Victoria Road, Swindon.   * **SWADS - Swindon and Wilts. Alcohol & Drug Service 🕿 01793 695405**   One-to-one counselling for anyone concerned about his or her own or someone else’s drinking. Help, support and advice for anyone with an alcohol-related problem.  Contact the above number for more information or to arrange an appointment.  You can also write to: 13 Milton Road, Swindon.   * **Central Assessment Drop-in Clinic**   Run by SWADS, Druglink and the Specialist Drug and Alcohol Service every Monday between 9:30 and 11:30 at 13 Milton Road (SWAD's base). No appointment necessary.   * **Cruse Bereavement Care 🕿 01793 619933** [www.crusebereavementcare.org.uk](http://www.crusebereavementcare.org.uk)   Support, advice and counselling to any bereaved person. Also organises a range of support and social groups. Contact the above number for more information or to arrange an appointment. You can also write to:39 Bath Road, Swindon, SN1 4AS. |

Sarah took an overdose in May, a few weeks before her finals. She had always done very well academically, but the strain of exams, plus coping with a traumatic relationship was just too much. She’d seen her GP a couple of weeks before because she was scared of her own feelings. “She told me to take paracetamols until my exams were over. She wasn’t interested in listening to how I was feeling. One day it all got too much and I just snapped. I smashed up my room and then swallowed painkillers. I don’t think I really wanted to die, but I just couldn’t stand being alive any more. Gradually it dawned on me that I might die. I told a friend and was taken to hospital. I felt incredibly angry, frustrated and guilty.”

We realise that coming to hospital after harming yourself in some way can be extremely difficult and traumatic experience. Depending on a number of different factors, you may be admitted to one of the wards for specific treatment, or overnight observation. Occasionally, the staff may suggest that it is alright for you to go straight home from hospital, if you don’t need any further treatment.

There are many factors that may make a person consider taking an overdose. Many people may be experiencing psychological problems such as depression; others may have experienced some kind of devastating personal loss or bereavement.

Attempting suicide is dangerous – it is damaging to the physical and mental senses, but it is no good telling someone to “snap out of it”, especially when they have felt so bad that they have contemplated killing themselves. Here we recognise that there are often very complex reasons why someone might take an overdose – most people who do it don’t want to live or die, they often want to do both at the same time. It is this exhausting psychological effect which may make a person act impulsively and attempt suicide.

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| * **Your GP/family doctor**   He or she can refer you on to a range of specialist services   * **Community Psychiatric Nurse (CPN)**   For psychiatric nursing, specialist therapy and on-going support. Please contact your GP, who can discuss with you how to get in touch with the CPN service that covers your geographical area. |

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| Services for Those Who Self-Injure  * **National Self-Harm Network**   A survivor-led organisation that campaigns for the rights and understanding for people who self-injure. Contact: Louise Pembroke, PO Box 16190, London, NW1 3WW.   * **SPEAR – Self Preservation Encouraging Active Response 🕿 01793 702900** [www.projectspear.com](http://www.projectspear.com)   Provides confidential support, information, newsletter, befriending for those who self-harm.  Ring or write to: PO Box 1465, Swindon, SN25 1JX   * **MIND – Swindon & District 🕿 01793 432031** [www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk)   Confidential advice and information to anyone who has an enquiry about a mental health issue, befriending scheme and an independent advocacy service to enable individuals to have their say and make informed choices. Ring the above number to discuss your needs in more detail or to make an appointment or write to: MIND, 1 Regent Circus, Swindon SN1 1PN. |

More Websites

* [www.mentalhealth.org.uk](http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk) - Mental Health Foundation's website
* [www.netdoctor.co.uk](http://www.netdoctor.co.uk) - health information website.
* [www.alcoholconcern.org.uk](http://www.alcoholconcern.org.uk) - advice and info. about alcohol use.
* [www.clinical-depression.co.uk](http://www.clinical-depression.co.uk) - a website for and run by sufferers.
* [www.rapeline.org.uk](http://www.rapeline.org.uk) - a Wiltshire based helpline for rape victims.

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| We have nurse specialists who link with the Accident & Emergency Department of The Great Western Hospital. If you are unsure of which service is right for you, or you would like to discuss how to be referred to one of the more specialist mental health services, they can be contacted by ringing **01793 604117**. Alternatively, you can ask the nurse looking after you to refer you.  It is advisable to make an appointment to see your GP within one week of an overdose.  If you are unsure of anything, please feel free to ask the nurse looking after you, who will be happy to explain things. If it would be helpful to talk about what led up to your attendance at the hospital, the staff are able to offer you time to sit and talk about how you are feeling. However, if you would rather sit and have some quiet time on your own, that’s fine too.  If you have any comments or suggestions about the care you have received whilst attending the hospital, please discuss these with the nurse looking after you.  If you prefer, you can write to either of the following:   * The Chief Executive, Great Western Hospital, Marlborough Road, Swindon SN3 6BB. * The Chief Executive, Avon & Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust,   Bath NHS House, Newbridge Hill, Bath, BA1 3QE | |
| Date of Review: March 2012  Review by Celia Moore  Compiled by the Mental Health Liaison Team | |



**and**



**Information Following**

**an Overdose**

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| What We Believe It does not matter about the origins of your self-harm or injury – here you will be treated with respect and understanding, however your injuries were caused. We will challenge any negative or blaming attitudes towards those who have taken an overdose or experience self-injury. We welcome comments and views on the service you receive whilst attending the hospital and will respond positively to suggestions for further improvements in the standard of care we provide. |