



# Working Together to Prevent Suicide

**World Suicide Prevention Day**  
10 September 2020



# Introduction

How can we create a world where fewer people die by suicide? Every year, the world comes together to try and answer this question. And raise awareness about suicide prevention.

At Babylon, we believe everyone should have access to the support they need, no matter who they are. That's why our GPs, nurses and therapists put their heads together to create this resource. It can help you get answers to important questions, discover mental health stats and connect to helplines.

Now more than ever, it's vital that we look after ourselves, the people we love and anyone in need of support and hope.

## #WorldSuicidePreventionDay



# Mental Health in a Global Pandemic

We wanted to get an idea of how many people are aware of mental healthcare options in the UK. So we conducted an online questionnaire that covered a wide age range - 18 to 65 year olds. Here are the results.



[Source: 750 nationally representative sample of UK adults aged 18-65, surveyed online 28th Aug 2020]



# Questions about suicide prevention, answered by our GPs and psychotherapists

People often have a lot of questions about mental health and suicide prevention. But it's not always easy to get the right answers. That's why our GPs and mental health experts are here to help. To help raise awareness and dispel some of the common myths about suicide, we've collected answers to some frequently asked questions.

If you are feeling suicidal or know someone who is struggling, please take a look at page 13 for helplines and charities that can provide support and information. Please remember that you do not have to struggle alone.





## What are the warning signs for suicide?

- Pre-existing conditions such as depression, psychotic disorder, drug or alcohol misuse (this can be compounded by additional physical disorders, particularly chronic pain and other disabling conditions)
- Talking about suicide, planning or making preparations (for example, will writing)
- Talking about hopelessness, being trapped or burdensome
- Increased consumption of drugs or alcohol
- Increased risk taking, dangerous or violent behaviour
- Isolation or becoming withdrawn from usual social support
- Recent significant life change (bereavement, divorce, job loss)

For more information and help on warning signs please visit:

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/types-of-mental-health-problems/suicidal-feelings/about-suicidal-feelings/#.XW9vDihKiM8>





## How can I prevent suicidal thoughts?

**Dr Laura Gold, Babylon Psychotherapist:** “This is a bit like saying ‘how do I stop myself from gambling, or misusing alcohol?’. The suicidal thought is normally the symptom of something much bigger and perhaps a more helpful inquiry would be more around causation and the context for when and how these thoughts show up. The important thing here is that we do not have to struggle alone. If you are experiencing suicidal thoughts, there are so many resources available to you, including your GP and thousands of highly trained registered psychotherapists ([https://www.bacp.co.uk/ Find a therapist](https://www.bacp.co.uk/Find-a-therapist)).”

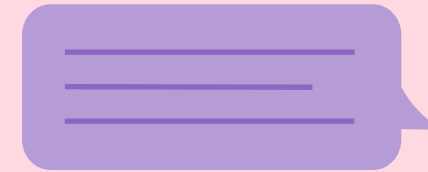
## Why do people feel suicidal?

**Dr Laura Gold, Babylon Psychotherapist:** “On a very simplistic level, the suicidal thought is an attempt to avoid an uncomfortable and possibly overwhelming feeling, or an aspect of our personality or past conditioning that we are ready to let go of.”



## I know someone who has suicidal thoughts, what can I do to help?

**Dr Laura Gold, Babylon Psychotherapist:** “It sounds counterintuitive but if you are a friend who is talking to someone who is feeling suicidal, the important thing is to not try to ‘fix’ the problem, but rather to deeply listen. Often what our system is crying out for is simply to be heard and seen. If we can stay present with our own discomfort at seeing someone else suffer, and bear witness to their process, rather than trying to avoid the feelings in ourselves, this can be the medicine in itself.”





## Is there anything I shouldn't say to someone who is depressed or having suicidal thoughts?

**Dr Laura Gold, Babylon Psychotherapist:** “Normally our emotions carry certain messages that, when listened to deeply, can be really important for helping someone to move forward in their lives. If someone is experiencing suicidal thoughts, the question may be more about which aspect of the person's life must end, rather than their physical existence. The questions might be: what must end now? Or what must be culled now?

Taken a step further, if an aspect of the life we are leading now is ending, how can this create space for inviting something new in. Of course this is a process; a journey and can take time to move through these stages.”

## How do I talk to someone that is having suicidal thoughts?

**Shola Yemi, Babylon Nurse:** “When someone reveals how they feel, it's best to not react shocked that the person is having these thoughts. Remain calm and open to them talking about their feelings. There is no point telling the person ‘not to be silly and not do it’ or to ‘snap out of it’ as these are just words - it is best to give the person details of places where they can get urgent, non-threatening help. A place where they will be listened to and heard. A place where they will feel safe, understood and urgent referrals can be made to the talking therapies and counselling services. Whilst this might be the time to accept some medication to try to stabilise the mental health, the person will be confident that their situation will be kept confidential and not discussed with anyone outside of the professional network. They will need the reassurance that they are not going mad, that this will pass with the right support and help.





## What is the difference between depression and suicide?

Dr Keith Grimes, Babylon GP: “Depression is a common and disabling mental health disorder that has been identified as the leading cause of disability in the world by the WHO, affecting more than 264 million people. Depression is a disease that is more than simple unhappiness: it is characterised by persistent low mood, loss of enjoyment, loss of energy and inactivity. While for some it may be short-lived and mild, it can be life-long and severe, and is a major risk factor for suicide.

Suicide describes the act of intentionally ending one’s own life. This may be as a consequence of experiencing a mental health disorder, such as Depression or Schizophrenia, but may also happen as the result of drug or alcohol intoxication. Around the world, nearly 800,000 people die by suicide every year, and it is the second leading cause of death in 15 to 29 year olds.”

[Reference: <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/depression>]





## Why has the pandemic affected people's mental health?

Dr Laura Gold, Babylon's Psychotherapist: "The fact that people have been locked into confined spaces with no real end in sight, 24/7, day in, day out made a lot of people reflect on their lives and their sometimes really desperate circumstances. Alcohol was readily available and drunk as early as could be in quantities unmeasured, without the thought of having to remain sober for work the next day, as many people had been furloughed or lost their job during the pandemic."



# 53.4%

struggled with mental health issues during the start of the COVID-19 pandemic\*

Shola Yemi, Babylon Nurse: "Despite the furlough scheme, many people had their main source of income cut or lost their jobs early in the pandemic, with no idea how they were going to make ends meet. It must have been tough for parents or families trying to homeschool their children at the height of the pandemic, seeing as some of them did not know how to do that or did not have access to computers or tablets for the children to use, and including their own limitations in education. In the case of domestic abuse, victims were stuck in the same place as their perpetrator for days on end, and having to deal with the situation may have made many of them feel very suicidal. The perpetrators may have also felt suicidal after ill treating their partner, and usually they could leave the home and relieve their tension, but in the case of the pandemic, they could not walk away, and so stayed and probably made the whole situation worse."

\* [Source: 750 nationally representative sample of UK adults aged 18-65, surveyed online 28th Aug 2020]



## Do antidepressants stop you from feeling suicidal?

Dr Keith Grimes, Babylon GP: “Antidepressants are one form of treatment for depression which can be effective in reducing the severity and duration of symptoms of the illness, including suicidal thoughts and intentions.

It is important to understand that most antidepressants do not work instantaneously, and have to be taken for weeks or more to begin to have an effect. In the early stages of treatment, some antidepressants can paradoxically increase suicidal thoughts and risk, because they enable someone to have the energy and focus to take their own life. That’s why it is important that medication is given as one part of a comprehensive package of treatment which may include talking therapy and social support.

In my own practice, I take time to understand the nature of the patient’s illness, as well as their support network. I have to carefully assess their risk of suicide as, for some, urgent specialist support is needed. For others, discussing coping strategies for handling suicidal thoughts and making plans on how to seek help should they arise, can also be helpful.”

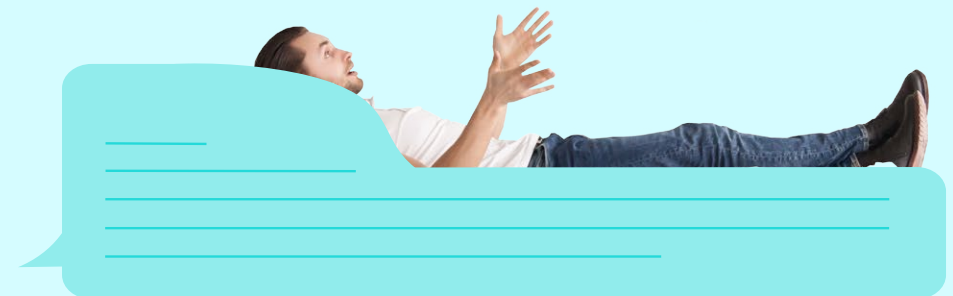
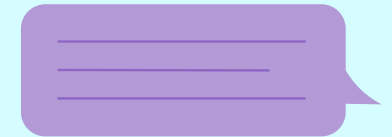
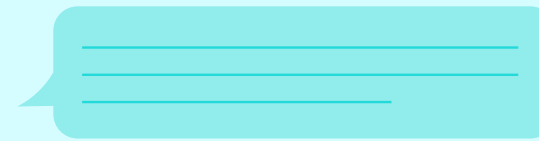


## Why are men more likely to take their life than women?

Shola Yemi, Babylon Nurse: "Obviously everyone is different, but men tend to internalise their feelings more whilst women have 'girlfriends' or close associates who they tend to confide in and have chats with. Women are more inclined to say what they are thinking, and how they are feeling. Men are more about taking the action whilst women can talk about their thoughts around that action and therefore will maybe tell a close friend what they intend to do - even in a hidden manner."

## How can/does therapy help? Why is it important?

Dr Laura Gold, Babylon Psychotherapist: "Expressing our thoughts and feelings in a safe non-judgmental space is vitally important. Often if we speak to friends or family, we can feel that we are burdening them, or we can feel judged, or feel ashamed of what's really going on under the surface. Speaking with a qualified psychotherapist can provide a really important space for healthy self-expression, for release, and for sharing."





# Help for suicidal thoughts

There's no right or wrong way to talk about suicidal feelings – starting the conversation is what's important. Help and support is available right now if you need it. You do not have to struggle with difficult feelings alone. These free helplines and charities are here to help when you're feeling down or desperate.

## **Samaritans** – for everyone

**CALL** 116 123

**EMAIL** [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org)

## **Campaign Against Living Miserably (CALM)** – for men

**CALL** 0800 58 58 58 – 5pm to midnight every day

**VISIT** the webchat page

## **Papyrus** – for people under 35

**CALL** 0800 068 41 41 – Monday to Friday 9am to 10pm, weekends and bank holidays 2pm to 10pm

**TEXT** 07860 039967

**EMAIL** [pat@papyrus-uk.org](mailto:pat@papyrus-uk.org)

## **Childline** – for children and young people under 19

**CALL** 0800 1111  
(the number will not show up on your phone bill)

**Call 111 out of hours** – they will help you find the support and help you need

**Contact your mental health crisis team** – if you have one



# Support services for domestic violence

The list below is recommended by our Babylon safeguarding leads.

## **Refuge 24 Hour National Domestic Violence Helpline**

Call 0808 2000 247

## **Live Fear Free Helpline (Wales)**

Call 0808 801 800

## **Scotland's 24 Hour Domestic Abuse And Forced Marriage Helpline (Scotland)**

Call 0800 027 1234

## **Northern Ireland 24 Hour Domestic And Sexual Abuse Helpline (N Ireland)**

Call 0808 802 1414

## **Karma Nirvana UK Helpline for honour-based abuse and forced marriage**

Call 0800 5999 247

## **Respect Guidance for perpetrators**

Call 0808 802 4040

## **The Men's Advice Line for male victims of domestic abuse**

Call 0808 8010327

## **ManKind Initiative Helpline for men suffering domestic violence, and their friends and family**

Call 01823334244

## **The Mix Free information and support for under 25s in the UK**

Call 0808 808 4994

## **Galop the National LGBT+ Domestic Abuse Helpline**

Call 0800 999 5428



# Babylon's digital Therapy

Having a healthy mind is essential for your wellbeing and ability to deal with life's ups and downs.

Babylon provides easy, affordable, confidential access to experienced therapists from your computer or smartphone. Our therapists can help and give support for a number of issues, including anxiety, depression, bereavements, phobias and relationship problems.

57%

say they would speak  
to a therapist via video\*

55%

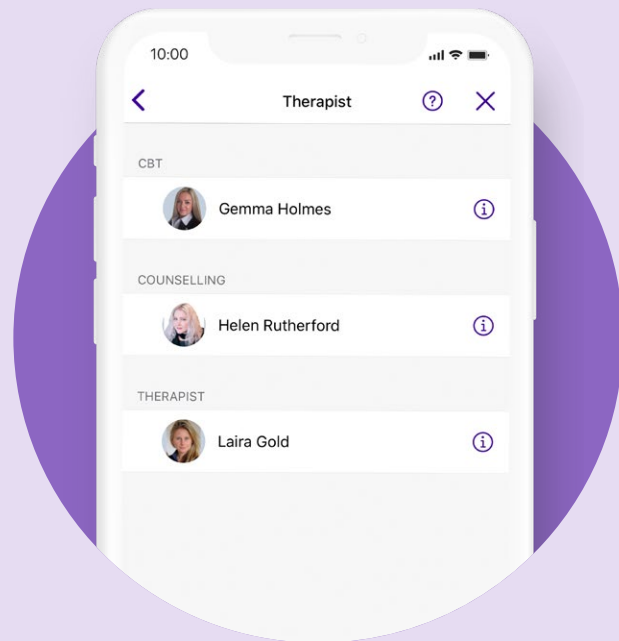
have never spoken to  
a therapist in person\*

\* [Source: 750 nationally representative sample of UK adults aged 18-65, surveyed online 28th Aug 2020]



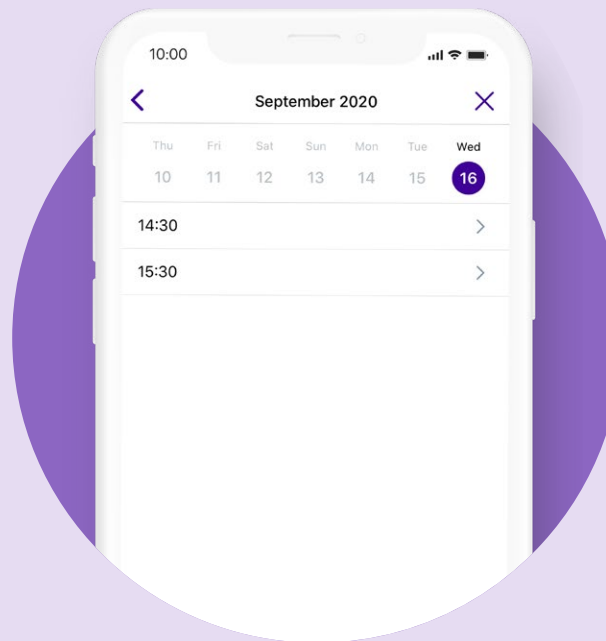


# How to book a Babylon therapy session



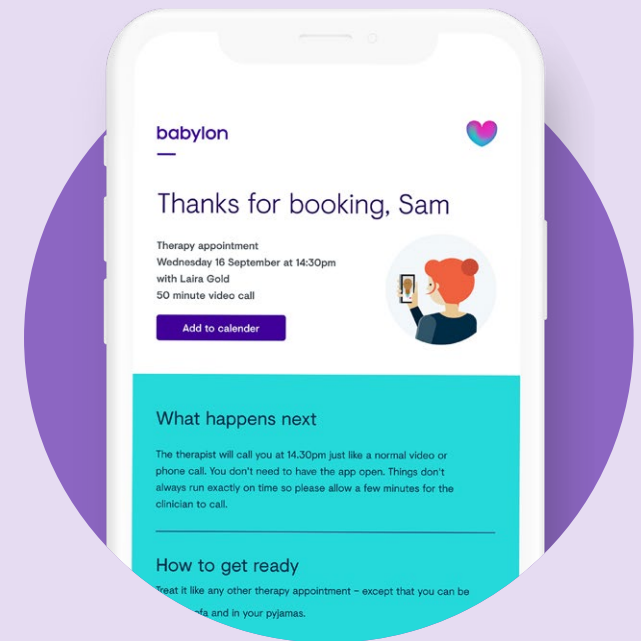
1

Simply download Babylon and register.  
Then you're ready to book an appointment  
with a therapist of your choice.



2

Choose your preferred date and time.  
You can also choose a phone or video call for  
your 50 minute session.



3

Once booked you will receive an email from  
Babylon to confirm your booking.

Please note therapy sessions are £39 for  
subscribers and £59 for non-subscribers.



## What to expect when you book a Babylon therapy session

10 minutes before your therapy session, Babylon will send you a notification to ask you to prepare for your appointment. You will need to go somewhere with good signal or wifi, and preferably a quiet environment with no distractions.

Your therapist will phone or video call you and take down some security details such as your name, date of birth and address. They will also confirm that everything spoken in the session will remain confidential unless they believe you or someone is at danger.

Your appointment will be 50 minutes and during this time you can discuss with your therapist how you are feeling. Your therapist will listen and use their expertise to assist you in trying to resolve any problems you are experiencing.

## How many sessions will I need?

The number of therapy sessions you will have can be co-agreed between you and the therapist, which will partly depend on the severity of the issue and how long it has been playing out for. Different therapists take different approaches; some work on a short to medium term basis and others prefer a longer term commitment. But ultimately the choice is yours. Often to give the process a chance, it is best to consider a minimum initial block of 6 sessions and then review from there.

## Digital therapy vs in-person therapy

Online therapy may be a very new concept to many people as the usual way to be seen is to visit a Psychologist's office and 'sit on the couch'. This new way of working requires you to come with an open mind and still 'sit on a couch', but be more comfortable in your own home, or in a place safe that is comfortable to you, and just 'be'. Let the process help you, and allow you time to process everything and absorb the help and support the clinicians are offering and just get the most out of every single session offered to you.

For more information on babylon's digital therapy please contact:  
[stina.sanders@babylon.health.com](mailto:stina.sanders@babylon.health.com)



## Need support? We're here for you

If you or someone that you know needs help or support, please contact the Babylon support team [support@babylonhealth.com](mailto:support@babylonhealth.com) or book an appointment directly on your smartphone. You can also book an appointment to speak with a GP who can offer you initial support.



### Information

For more information or to speak to our mental health experts, please contact Babylon's press team:

Email: [press@babylonhealth.com](mailto:press@babylonhealth.com)