



# A story about suicide

Harry had retired off the land once his wife Alice was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease three years ago. Now he lives in a small brick flat near the nursing home where Alice was cared for and visited her every day.

As Alice's condition deteriorated Harry became more depressed. Being with her was becoming unbearable. She would sit motionless in her chair refusing to look at him or talk. He despaired that she would not even miss him if he did not visit but then where would he belong without her?

Harry rang his sons but neither was willing to drop everything at work to visit. 'No one understands what this is like', thought Harry sadly. The nursing home staff were kind but had just pushed brochures into his hand with a Helpline phone number. There seemed to be no purpose to Harry's life anymore. He was of no use to Alice and without her there seemed to be no point to his life at all.

As Harry dragged himself back home one afternoon he ran through his options again. It wasn't Alice's fault she was sick but Harry didn't ever want to be in that position. He couldn't bear the thought that he might be a burden to his sons one day if he was no longer able to even remember who he was.

As Harry sat at his table he again weighed up the three ways he could end his life. He had everything he needed in the shed.

## How can you help yourself?

- Realise you are not alone. Thoughts about suicide are only thoughts. You don't need to act on them.
- It is normal to feel overwhelmed and distressed during difficult times. Reaching out to someone and talking about it is how to get back on track.
- Keep communication open with friends, family, neighbours and professional staff.
- Write down your feelings, develop a plan to stay safe when you feel overwhelmed.
- Not coping is not a sign of weakness. It takes real strength to recognise what you are going through and decide to talk to someone about it.
- Make use of any supports that you already have around you.

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- Sometimes it takes a couple of tries to get someone to understand how bad you feel. Keep trying. Don't give up.
- Call or come in and talk to the TOMNET Professional Support Team or other blokes. We understand about suicide.

## What can you do for someone else?

Check what events may have happened. Has he had:

- A recent health diagnosis?
- A recent loss of a loved one, job, income, pet or a relationship breakdown?
- A major change in circumstances such as retirement or a move to aged care?
- Has there been a suicide of a family member, friend or valued person?
- Are there legal or financial problems?

## How does he feel?

- Ask how he feels about what is happening around him, and to him.
- What does this mean to him?
- Is he under stress or in pain? Is the pain bearable?

## What is he doing?

- Have there been previous suicide attempts?
- Is he being moody, sad or withdrawn?
- Is he increasing his use of drugs or alcohol?
- Is there talk of feeling worthless?
- Is he taking less care of himself?
- Is he talking or joking about suicide?
- Is he expressing thoughts about death?
- Is he saying goodbye or giving away possessions?

## What can you do?

- Take warning signs seriously and act immediately.
- Ask if he has plans to commit suicide.
- Don't keep the plans a secret. Seek help.
- Reaching out could save a life.

## Help is available 24 hours a day 7 days a week

Suicide Call Back Service: 1300 659 467


Mensline Australia: 1300 789 978

Lifeline: 13 11 14

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**Talk to us. We understand.**  
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**You will have good  
and bad days but  
speaking to other men  
or a member of the  
TOMNET Professional  
Support Team is one step  
towards being heard  
and supported.**

## The TOMNET Centre

 **(07) 4638 9080**

223 Hume St Toowoomba QLD 4350  
PO BOX 7801 Toowoomba QLD 4350

Email: [tomnet05@tomnetinc.org.au](mailto:tomnet05@tomnetinc.org.au)

### Open:

Monday - Thursday 9:00am - 4:00pm  
Friday 9:00am - 3:00pm

**FOR IMMEDIATE HELP, call:**

**Lifeline 13 11 14**

Supported by:



Australian Government  
Department of Health

