



# LOST VOICES

## NEED TO TALK ABOUT SUICIDE

### USER GUIDE



Lost Voices is a FME Programme



FRESH MINDS  
EDUCATION

HEALING HEARTS & HELPING HANDS





# Suicide Prevention

## LEADERS KEY POINTS

- Welcome the group of young people into the set environment
- Introduce yourself if you are unfamiliar to the group
- Introduce the topic - Suicide Prevention
- Create a signal young people can use throughout presentation when needing to leave the room

"Hello guys, welcome to today's presentation where we will be exploring the need to talk about suicide as a topic, the effects it can have on young people and their family dynamic, and ways of coping and supporting each other."



*If you feel it would be beneficial for the young people to have copies of the presentation, printouts or copies can be handed out at this time as well as pens for writing down additional information.*

"My name is (*your name*) and I will be leading today's presentation which we will start exploring together in just a minute.

First, let's create a group agreement for this topic together. Let's think of all the things we would like to have in place for us to feel more comfortable discussing this topic together".

- » Compassion
- » Confidentiality
- » Empathy
- » Respect
- » Time management
- » Use of language
- » Any other relevant suggestions that young people may offer



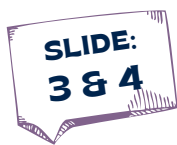


Before moving on to the next slide create a signal with the young people that can let you know they are ok if they need to leave the room at any time. If they feel uncomfortable, they can leave without signalling and another leader can follow them to check they are okay.

"Just before we get started, I would like all of you together to come up with a hand signal that you can use throughout the presentation if you need to leave the room for something like needing the toilet. However, because this can be a sensitive topic for many young people if you do find yourself feeling uncomfortable you are more than welcome to leave without signalling and another team leader will assist you outside of the room."

## LEADER NOTES





# Introduction

## LEADERS KEY POINTS

- Outline key learning objectives.
- Outline hopes for the presentation.
- Encourage interaction and engagement from the young people.

## Reviewing Key Learning Objectives and Hopes for the Presentations

The young people are now introduced to both you and the presentation. Now you must introduce them to their learning objectives and what you hope they will take away from these slides and discussions.

### We want them to leave this lesson with:

- A clear understanding of what suicide is.
- Prevention techniques.
- Examples of suicide prevention.
- Understanding of ways to keep safe and feel better and hopefully support other people around us.

“Our hope for all of you after this session is that you will all have a clearer understanding of what suicide and suicide prevention is. We want to provide you with the knowledge to carry out suicide prevention and support those around you.

We are also going to provide you with some statistical knowledge to comprehend how relevant all of this is today. Another key aspect of this presentation is to inform and understand all the ways to create a safe environment in which young people like yourselves can feel better and more supported so that you can go on to support others around you,”



Young people should be encouraged to engage in all activities to the best of their ability, (some young people may be naturally more introverted, and this can be seen as a negative). As a leader, you should encourage the young people to engage the best they can, with care and acknowledgement for their fellow peers. The most effective learning takes place in a comforting and kind environment.



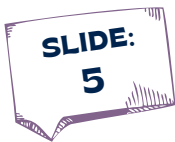


"This topic will be more relevant to some of you more than others which can be a great way for us to learn from each other, I would ask that you consider that maybe your peers are struggling with something along these lines and would benefit massively from this session. It is highly encouraged that you all listen and engage to the content to the best of your abilities and that we will all be understanding as a group if anyone feels the need to take a break during this session so we can create a comfortable, kind and open environment to learn effectively."



## LEADER NOTES





# Icebreaker

This icebreaker activity is called the ‘What am I?’ game. The objective of this activity is to get all the young people talking and engaging in some light-hearted fun. This will allow everyone to become familiar with one another and encourage engagement and discussion throughout the presentation.

To start this activity, ask all the young people to gather around or sit in a circle. Hand a Post-it note to each person and ask them to write a noun on the paper e.g., dog, cat, football. Once each young person has written on their note ask them to place it on the forehead of the person sitting opposite them. It is important to make sure nobody says what they have written. Give each pair 5 to 10 minutes of asking questions and guessing before allowing each person to remove the paper and reveal the answer.

“For this activity, you all need to sit in a circle, make sure you are facing somebody else in the group. Each of you are getting a Post-it note, once you have yours, I want you to write a noun it, for example, dog. Once you all have thoughts of your word and written it down, I want you to place the paper on the forehead of the person in front of you.

It is important you don’t show that person the word you wrote. I’m going to give you all 5 or 10 minutes to ask questions and guess what the word on your forehead is. Once the time is up, you can remove the paper and reveal the word, if you don’t answer correctly in the given time”.



## LEADER NOTES







## What does suicide mean?

### TRANSITIONING INTO THIS SLIDE:

From this slide, it is encouraged to open the conversation to all the young people in the room. Discuss the definitions of suicide, the young people's opinions, and any relevant information they are willing to share.

*Leader can use a flipchart and pens to list what comes up in this brief discussion.*

It is important to give the young people a definition of suicide as something to refer to if educating others or refreshing their own memories. This could be an opportunity to gain some perspective on their definitions or information surrounding suicide as a starting point for the rest of the presentation.

"So, what is suicide? What do we mean when we use the word suicide? Have we all heard this word being used before?"



Prompt the young people to give suggestions and ideas on the definition, allow time for discussion.

Leader can suggest, in the case the group is not forthcoming with ideas – *intentional self-harm, intentional or unintentional harm that results in our own passing, actions stemming from emotional distress, etc.*

Then turn attention to the presentation slide and discuss these points.

"Let's break it down and use the simple definition that is used in the presentation. It says suicide is when a person intentionally harms himself or herself or unintentionally causes their own passing. People who choose suicide are typically extremely unhappy and think that it is the only way for them to end the pain they are experiencing.

That is quite a detailed definition, but it does give you a clear description of what suicide is and what maybe a person feels or their mindset in the lead-up. It is important for you guys to understand what it is we are talking about exactly before we start into the rest of the presentation.

Does anyone have anything they want to share with the group? Any additions to our definition or respectful information or opinions to share before we move on?"







## What measures can be taken in regard to suicide prevention?

### LEADERS KEY POINTS:

This can be a sensitive area to discuss when young people are presented with information that is directly linked to them. Language is something to be extremely mindful of when talking about suicide; bereavements, loss of any kind, or addiction. It is important to approach this topic with care and understand that these situations are out of any child or young person's control, these decisions were made for them and therefore, need more care and caution when discussing these topics.

With a presentation slide like this one, it is beneficial to encourage engagement to get the young people thinking and talking to each other. Ask the question what we can do to prevent suicide and open the room for conversation, write the young people's answers somewhere visible, and once they are all satisfied with their answers reveal the presentation slide and add any left out to their list. This will allow the young people to take control of the conversation and in turn, the talk and presentation themselves.

"Now that we have a definition of what suicide is and we all understand we're going to move onto preventative measures.

- what is a preventative measure?

A preventative measure is something we can do to reduce the probability of something happening.

Things that we can do to help:

- Training- suicide prevention training such as Connections Link Life.
- Listening to someone and their story, actively and non-judgementally
- Say the word 'suicide', if you are worried that someone is thinking about or talking about suicide ask them, "Are you thinking about suicide?".
- Connecting the person with professional support such as a GP, if they are thinking of suicide.
- Connecting the person with personal connections that they find support in, such as family member, friend, youth worker.
- Connecting a person with things that bring them joy or comfort.
- Gain knowledge and confidence to demonstrate coping skills or encourage wellness activities."





"Before we take a look at the presentation slide, I want you guys to get into small groups (or pairs) and have a small discussion and come up with some ideas and come up with some preventative measures by yourselves. I'll give you an example before you get started.

Therapy or counselling is a great preventative measure in some cases, it can help people express their thoughts and feelings and help take the some of the pressure and worries off a person.

So, I will give you all 5 or 10 minutes to discuss and then we'll look at the presentation slide for some more ideas".



Give the young people between 5 and 10 minutes to discuss preventative measures, write them somewhere visible to the young people and add in the points from the presentation if not previously mentioned.

*Leader can use a flipchart and pens to list what comes up in this brief discussion.*

**Turn attention to the presentation slide.**

"From the presentation we can see that suicide hotlines can help people who are struggling with their mental health. These hotlines provide immediate support and give guidance to people who are in a crisis.

We've already spoken about therapy and counselling that can help a person understand their thoughts and feelings. Therapy also helps people develop healthy coping skills for use when feeling stressed, anxious or overwhelmed.

Community support groups and programmes are a great way to bring people together to discuss their struggles and experiences. These groups usually are going through similar troubles and sharing these allows for support and relatability.

Having access to mental health treatment is so important. Encouraging and promoting people to seek mental health support is a very effective way to prevent suicide. They provide support and treatments including medical treatments for people that are struggling. However, this type of support can be extremely expensive and unaffordable for some people so rallying together to make these services more accessible and affordable is essential.

Now that we have all our preventative measures written up (on the board etc.) you can take a photo or write them down just for future reference. These measures could also be useful if you are struggling or know somebody else who is struggling".





**LEADER NOTES**

Lined area for leader notes.





**SLIDE:  
8**

## How can creating Art help?

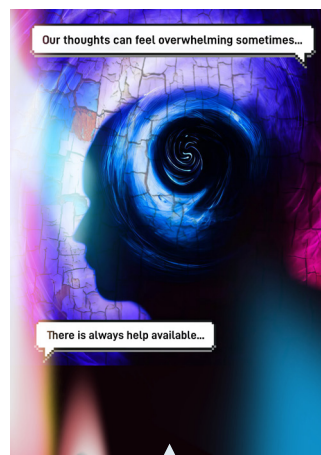
Let's have a look at how artwork can be used to express ourselves and to connect with one another.

### LEADERS KEY POINTS

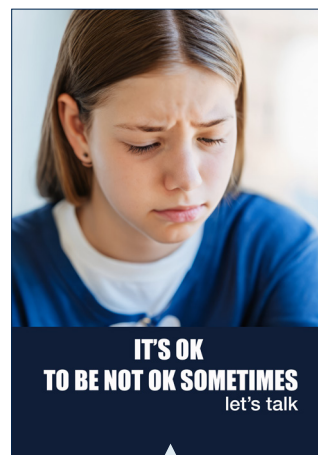
- What does the colours say to you?
- What do the images say to you, and how the artist has used them?
- What does the text used make you feel?
- What does the poster, say to you? What is it about?
- Is there a particular poster that stands out to you?



**Talking About Suicide Can Be Difficult**



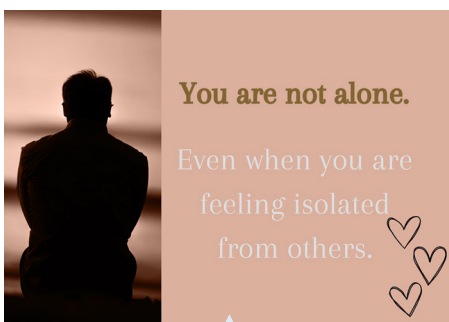
**Thoughts Can Be Overwhelming**



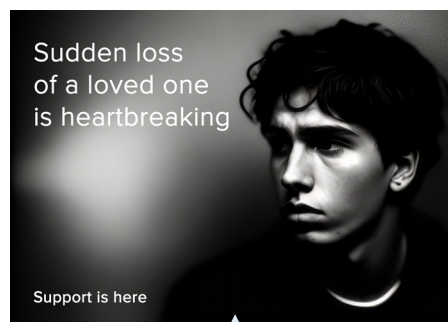
**It's Ok Not to Be Ok**



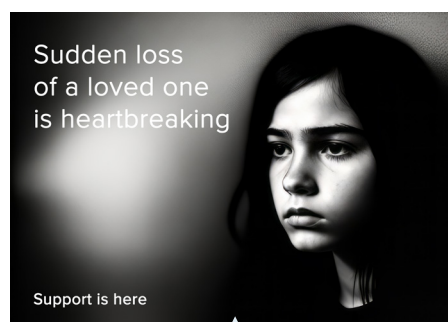
**Suicidal Thoughts Can Be Difficult**



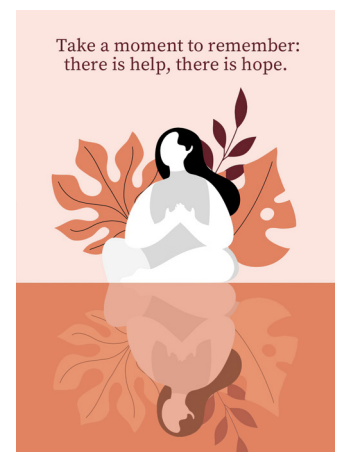
**You Are Not Alone**



**Sudden Loss is Heartbreaking**



**Support is Here**



**Take a Moment**





## Activity:

"Let's get into different pairs, half the group is going to choose images they feel would be good in a poster, the poster should aim to connect with other Young People, to let them know that are not alone in whatever they are experiencing, and that there is support for them available."



Leader can organise the group into A's or B's, each pair will have an A and B.

### Group A:

You will be gathering and choosing images that speak to you, this might be 1 or many images collated to make one poster with a cohesive message.

**You will be thinking about:**

- » Colours
- » Shapes
- » Shadows
- » Styles
- » Tone
- » Location
- » Theme
- » If a person(s) in images:
  - Age
  - Gender
  - Ethnicity etc.

### Group B:

You will be choosing slogans, or text that you would like to see on a poster. These should have a clear and concise message, with the hopes to resonate with young people. They should reflect the theme, and offer direction to support (Resources) like the Lost Voices Support Page

**You will be thinking about:**

- » Colours
- » Shapes
- » Shadows
- » Tone
- » Font
- » Size
- » Rhyme
- » Sentence structure
- » Storytelling
- » Impact
- » Flow

"Now we are going to work with our partner to put our ideas together, we are going to create at least 1 final design joining our two ideas together.

Think about what text your partner has created, does it work with the images you have chosen? Once you have agreed on what aspects can be merged, draft your final poster design"





**Leader allows time for this activity to be completed. Before the group shares with each other.**

*"So, we are going to share our ideas with one another, let's work from (PAIR 1 onwards). We would love to hear why you have chosen the ...."* (Refer to bullet points above).

"What part of the **AMBER Approach** have we just explored together?

We have gone through all the things in AMBER's name today.

We can see how **EXPRESS** can help us to work through feelings, emotions, and our thoughts around things. Using art to create these posters, we engaged with each other and came up with ways to help connect with other young people. This has been a demonstration of how **ANCHOR** shows up for us in group settings, connecting with our pair in the safe space we have created.

For a lot of people, art can be a way to **RELAX**, when we are focused and creating something this can be very therapeutic, encouraging space to **BREATHE**.

Through the creation of art, we have all explored the **MOVE** in **AMBER**. As we have moved our creative energy onto our pages."

## LEADER NOTES





# Lost Voices Podcast



## LEADERS KEY POINTS

Watching the Lost Voices podcast can allow young people to feel related to, as it is young people discussing issues in relation to how they affect young people.

These podcasts may also highlight topics that may not have been previously discussed, giving young people an opportunity to delve deeper into the topic ie. Need to Talk About Suicide.

“Let’s watch a Lost Voices animated podcast together. The Lost Voices Group opened conversation for young people around this topic, and created safe space for sharing thoughts, emotions, and experiences.

Let’s go back to our group agreement and the points we agreed on around empathy and respect, lets ensure we are being kind to each other while we watch this together and when we share with each other on reflection.”



**Watch Podcast**

## LEADER NOTES







## Discussion

### LEADERS KEY POINTS

This is the time to allow for a discussion following the podcast. Leader should allow for group to offer their initial thoughts before prompting. See below for prompt questions:

- » Why do you think the Lost Voices group wanted to make this podcast?
- » Why is it relevant to us?
- » What did you like about what they had to say?
- » What did you not like about what they shared?
- » What do you think they want adults to know from this podcast?
- » Do you think the podcast was informative/ relatable?
- » What have you taken away from the podcast?
- » What do you think about the ripple effect?
- » Do you agree with the Lost Voices Group that suicide isn't talked about enough?
- » What do you think about the importance of young people knowing the truth about a suicide death?
- » Need to be included in the conversation?
- » What did to the poem make you think/ feel?
- » What help would you like someone to receive when they are bereaved by suicide in their schools, clubs, etc.?
- » What do you think about what the group said about fault or blame?
- » Do you think you would like to bring up the conversation up with the people around you?
- » Do you feel more encouraged and equipped to connect with other people around this topic?
- » What do you think about what the group shared about things they could do to help or support the people around them?
- » What coping methods/ measures have you picked up from the podcast?

### LEADER NOTES

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## Statistics

### LEADERS KEY POINTS:

- Using statistics can give deeper understanding and a more informative foundation when discussing topics such as breakdowns in family life.
- Helps to see how relatable a certain situation may be.
- It is important to remember statistics in any case are collected from real people, understanding and an upheld level of respect when discussing these statistics and/or anything related to this topic of conversation should always be paramount.

The statistical presentation slide gives young people a great insight into how frequently any event occurs ie., how frequently suicide occurs in Northern Ireland.

This highlights how important it is for people to talk about these issues and struggles to make it a more comfortable and regular conversation. However, when we are talking about statistics it is essential that young people understand that there are real people behind these numbers.

It may be useful to remind the young people to treat this information with respect to aid themselves and others feel comfortable and supported.

"This next slide is a little more statistical and should give you all a greater insight into how relevant and frequent suicide and suicidal thoughts or feelings really are in Northern Ireland. As always when we are talking about facts and figures it is really important that all of you treat this information with great respect.

I want you all to remember that there are real people behind these numbers and that can be quite overwhelming.

I would ask that we all listen attentively and be open to understanding that these issues may not affect you directly but that could be different for someone else in the room who may be struggling or know someone who is struggling."





In 2021, there were 14.3 deaths from suicide per 100,000 people in Northern Ireland. This is a slightly higher rate than the other regions of the UK. The majority of deaths occurred within the Belfast Health Trust area, so in the Greater Belfast Area, followed by the Western Trust, which would be the counties of Derry, Tyrone and Fermanagh.

The Northern Trust had the lowest suicide levels of 10.4 per 100,000 which of course is still quite high. All these figures are high and the fact that Northern Ireland has higher rates of suicide than other regions of the UK is very alarming. This really highlights why we need to have more open and honest conversations like this one today to educate each other on suicide, suicidal thoughts and suicide prevention measures"

- Does anybody have any questions or thoughts that they would like to share with the group?"
- What things might have an impact on our emotions and our mental health?
- What do you think about these statistics? Did they shock you? Were you not surprised?



## LEADER NOTES



SLIDE:  
12

## Activity (Suggested- Time Permitting)

### LEADERS KEY POINTS

Additional activities can be found in the Mental Health Booster Booklet.



### Activity: 'Voicemail Character'

"We start this activity with a sheet of paper, and the aim to create a character. Each person in the group will add to the character one by one, until there is enough information about them that we agree we know enough about them. Think about the following things to create your character:

- How they look: Eye colour, hair colour, skin colour, complexion, tattoos, piercings, scars etc
- Their personality: outgoing, shy, caring, hot tempered, sensitive, kind, funny, clever, moody etc
- What do they like? Football, tv, reading, pizza etc
- What don't they like? Loud noises, animals etc
- Who are the people around them and what do their relationships look like?
- Anything else that helps us know them: gender identity, age, sexual orientation, occupation, disability, life events.



Once we have a character, we will think about what kind messages might this person get on their answering machine. Who have we created in the world around them, and what this tells us about the character.

We then think about the character and what it might be like if they were struggling, maybe their mental or emotional health is languishing, maybe they are thinking about suicide. What are the things you would like them to hear? What would you like to hear in a time of need?"



It is then useful to debrief after the activity, to go over who this character was, how the outside world interacted with them, and then how we interacted with them when we were aware of possible struggles.







# Amber Approach

## LEADERS KEY POINTS

Leader should open this up to the group and ask what they can tell us about each part of **AMBER**'s Name.

"So, we looked at the **AMBER Approach** before we started looking at these topics.

Let us recap on what **AMBER** is and how we use it"



Leader should open this up to the group and ask what they can tell us about each part of **AMBER**'s Name.



### A - ANCHOR

Anchoring, we can anchor through co-regulation, this is from friendships, family members, teachers, youth workers etc.



### M - MOVE

Moving your body releases built up energy through exercise, making art or music. Taking care of yourself both inside and outside, making your bed, having a shower.



### B - BREATHE

Breathing is the crucial link between mind and body. Taking space and time to breathe can help calm the mind.



### E- EXPRESS

Express yourself safely. Expressing through crying, talking, creativity can release difficult emotions.



### R- RELAX

Finding activities that help you relax and feel restored are important to aid your body regulate and process what is going on within your life.





# Conclusion

Within the conclusion slide it is key to look back over the content taught and discussed within the presentation. Revisiting definitions, preventative measures, statistics etc., brings the young people back to a centre focus and allows them to remember or come up with any questions, opinions or thoughts that they may have.

Allowing time for these questions or points of discussion is greatly beneficial to promote more of these open conversations between the young people in the future.

“Now that we have spoken about all the facts and the figures, I want to just bring everyone back together to quickly recap and debrief. So, just to conclude suicide prevention brings together multiple resources and approaches such as awareness, education, accessible mental support, crisis helplines etc. From using these resources and promoting the use of these resources, we can all make significant progress to prevent suicide in our families and our communities. However, it is good to keep in mind that continuous research and evaluation is needed to be able to refine and improve suicide prevention strategies for the future.”



## LEADER NOTES





**SLIDE:  
15**

## Sources that can help you

It is important to provide the sources of support and support organisations to the young people in case they feel the need to contact them after the talk or in the future, for themselves or others around them.

Present the slide of organisations to the group, allow them to write them down or take a picture to have for potential future usage.

“Just so you have an idea of the organisations out there that help there’s a few up on the board. We can see Papyrus- prevention of young suicide, pieta house and SP-UK suicide prevention UK, all these groups act as a support and guide for anybody particularly young people like yourselves. They can provide immediate or long-term help, so you never have to feel alone or isolated when dealing with a difficult situation or with difficult feelings or thoughts”.



## LEADER NOTES





## Group Discussion

## LEADERS KEY POINTS

It is beneficial to give the young people time to talk to each other and to yourself as a type of debrief.

Topics such as these can create discomfort when talking about them for the first time and allowing time for self-thought and self-reflection can ease these feelings before continuing with day-to-day activities.

## LEADER NOTES







# Thank You

## LEADERS KEY POINTS

Thank the young people for their time and attention before allowing them time to debrief amongst themselves and ask any questions if necessary.

"I just want to thank all of you for coming here and listening today. It is really appreciated because the more we have these open, honest conversations the easier they get, and less people will feel alone and isolated when struggling with issues such as suicide. I'll let you guys have a few minutes of discussion amongst yourselves about what we have spoken about today and if you do have any questions or thoughts to share you can come talk to me or any member of staff."



## LEADER NOTES





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**FME** FRESH MINDS  
EDUCATION  
HEALING HEARTS & HELPING HANDS