

## What you can do

Talking about suicide doesn't increase the risk of someone attempting to take their own life. Instead, it can enhance safety by reducing feelings of isolation and hopelessness. Giving someone the space to talk openly about feeling suicidal offers opportunities for connection, reassurance, safe support, and hope for change.

### You can:

- Talk: Ask directly, "Are you feeling overwhelmed or having thoughts of suicide?"
- Listen: Without judgment. Let them share.
- Support: Help them contact their GP, health visitor, or a mental health service.
- In Crisis? Call 999 or visit A&E. Buckinghamshire Safe Haven service is a local alternative to A&E.



## Parenting is a journey, not a test. Support is essential along the way.

- Visit [buckinghamshire.gov.uk/unmasking-parenthood](https://buckinghamshire.gov.uk/unmasking-parenthood) for more information.
- You can self-refer to our local service provider Bucks Talking Therapies.
- Text TALK and your name to: 07798 667 169 or call 01865 901 600 (opening times vary)
- You can speak to your GP, Health Visitor or Midwife about a referral to Bucks Mind Perinatal Support Service.

If you need help for a mental health crisis or emergency, you should get immediate expert advice and assessment. Get advice from NHS 111 by calling 111 and selecting the mental health option. You can ask for an urgent GP appointment or visit the nearest Emergency Department (A&E). **If you or someone you know might be at risk of harming themselves or others call 999.**

For a safe and supportive alternative to A&E for adults (18+) in Bucks experiencing a mental health crisis, contact Bucks Safe Haven between 6pm-midnight, 7 days a week:

- Aylesbury: 01296 453017
- High Wycombe: 01494 218098



## UNMASKING PARENTHOOD

— *you matter too* —

Wellbeing support for new  
and expecting parents



Buckinghamshire  
Council

# Parenting is tough

## *you're not alone*

Becoming a parent can be overwhelming. Pregnancy and early parenthood bring big changes, making your world feel new and unpredictable. Parenthood often turns out differently to what we had imagined. It can be tough to adapt to unexpected changes, sleepless nights, a fussy baby, and navigating a new sense of self defined by how well we think we're coping. It's common to try to hide any signs that you are struggling from others, but this can increase feelings of shame and make you feel isolated. However, it's important to share how you're feeling with other people. Behind the smiles, baby photos and social media posts, many new parents feel overwhelmed, anxious, or low. These feelings are common but when they become persistent or intense, it's important to seek help. Deciding to talk about suicide is an act of courage and hope for change. Allowing other people to support you increases safety for you and your baby.



[buckinghamshire.gov.uk/  
unmasking-parenthood](https://buckinghamshire.gov.uk/unmasking-parenthood)



## Signs to look out for

You or someone you know may be struggling if they:

- Talk about feeling hopeless, trapped, or like a burden
- Reduced interest in personal hygiene and appearance.
- Social withdrawal (partner, family, friends).
- Missing healthcare appointments (ante and postnatal care, mental health).
- Feel disconnected from their baby or partner
- Experience sleep issues, appetite changes, or panic attacks
- Use alcohol or drugs more than usual
- Show sudden calmness after deep distress
- Express thoughts of death or suicide, even jokingly
- Give away possessions or say goodbye unexpectedly
- Reckless behaviour



## For dads and non-birthing parents

Men may show different signs:

- Irritability, anger, or aggression
- Trouble concentrating or relaxing
- Loss of interest in hobbies
- Feeling unable to cope but hiding it well

Having thoughts of suicide doesn't make you a 'bad' or unfit parent; it simply means you're human and going through a tough time. Seeking help for these thoughts shows that you are a caring and protective parent who deeply cares about your baby's and family's wellbeing. Taking that first step to seek help is crucial for feeling better and taking care of both yourself and your baby.