

Are you feeling depressed, low or having suicidal thoughts?

AvMA is an independent charity specialising in giving advice and assistance to people who feel they have or may have experienced a medical accident.

AvMA recognises that medical injuries can have a devastating impact on the lives of the injured person and their families, it is not unusual for people affected to feel low, depressed and sometimes suicidal. AvMA is only experienced in guiding people to navigate pathways that may give answers to questions about their care or in seeking redress and enforcing their legal rights, we are not able to give an advice on managing feelings associated with depression and anxiety, this is a specialist area that falls outside of our expertise.

If you are finding it difficult to manage your feelings and or have concerns about your mental health and wellbeing we urge you to seek medical advice from your GP to help you cope with this and if necessary they can refer you to the relevant specialists for advice.

You may find the following leaflets and information useful:



Advice from the Royal College Psychiatrists. This leaflet list organisations that may be able to support and or help you:

www.rcpsych.ac.uk/healthadvice/problemsanddisorders/feelingoverwhelmed.aspx



MIND is a specialist organisation that can support or direct you in times when you are feeling vulnerable and your mental health feels at risk. Their website sets out what mental health services may be available to assist you further:

www.mind.org.uk/need-urgent-help



The Samaritans are a specialist organisation which will treat your concerns in confidence unless there are exceptional circumstances; they are able to listen to you and can help with talking through your concerns. You can find more information and contact details about the Samaritans in their leaflet:

www.samaritans.org/how-we-can-help/if-youre-having-difficult-time/signs-you-may-be-struggling-cope/



This NHS run service is for anyone in mental health crisis, you can call 111 and then receive support from trained mental health professionals. The 24/7 service is available for people of all ages, including children:

www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/mental-health-services/where-to-get-urgent-help-for-mental-health/

AvMA offers a confidential advice and information service and anything you tell us about your treatment, care and its effects on you will be kept confidential. However, there may be rare circumstances when our concerns for your safety or those of someone you are telephoning about are so great or the threat of something harmful happening to you is so real and considerable that we may exercise our discretion and tell others who are better able to assist you about our concerns.

We look to the Samaritans for guidance on when we could or should be concerned about something harmful happening to one of our clients or someone who they are contacting us about. If we do consider it necessary to exercise our discretion in this way then your details may be passed to people who'll be able to get help to you, like the ambulance service.

We take your confidentiality very seriously and will only consider speaking to someone else if we are really worried about what you have told us and AvMA feel that you are unable to make decisions.

The sort of circumstances where this may apply are:

- If you're in immediate danger of being hurt by someone else, we may ask the police to come and check, or do something to make sure that you're safe.
- AvMA will treat all threats of suicide as a potential life threatening risk to you and we will act appropriately to address this concern.
- AvMA are not able to counsel you if you threaten suicide.
- AvMA considers there to be a difference between a real and actual threat of suicide and suicidal thoughts that may be the natural result of feeling depressed and anxious. As we are not experts it can sometimes be difficult for us to tell the difference but where we have any doubts we will err on the side of caution and advise the relevant authorities that the threat has arisen.
- If you've told us that a child is in danger, we may need to get them help. Sometimes the only way of doing that will be to contact you and ask you for more details. It may be the police that help us with this
- We may ask social services to arrange to speak to you and see how they might be able to help you.

If you don't share your details with us, we are unable to contact you or anyone else on your behalf.

Action against Medical Accidents (AvMA)

AvMA is the charity for patient safety and justice. We provide free specialist advice and support to people when things go wrong in healthcare and campaign to improve patient safety and justice.

For advice and information visit our website
www.avma.org.uk

Or call our helpline (10am-3.30pm Monday-Friday)
0345 123 2352

Registered charity in England & Wales (299123) and Scotland (SCO39683)

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