

THROWING A LIFELINE

TO MARK WORLD SUICIDE PREVENTION DAY, OK! LOOKS AT THE TRIGGERS AND WARNING SIGNS AND HOW TO SUPPORT THOSE FEELING HOPELESS

With the number of suicides among young women rising, keeping those close to us safe is more important than ever. Alarming figures show that more women aged 20 to 24 are taking their own lives, and the Office for National Statistics states that the death rate in this age group has risen by 76 per cent since 2006. Although the overall number of suicides by men and women fell by four per cent in the UK last year, the medical profession believes that the pressures of social media are having an increasingly devastating effect on many women. The sobering statistics mean that World Suicide Prevention Day on September 10 has added resonance, with governments and groups worldwide uniting in a bid to reduce the 800,000 global suicides each year.

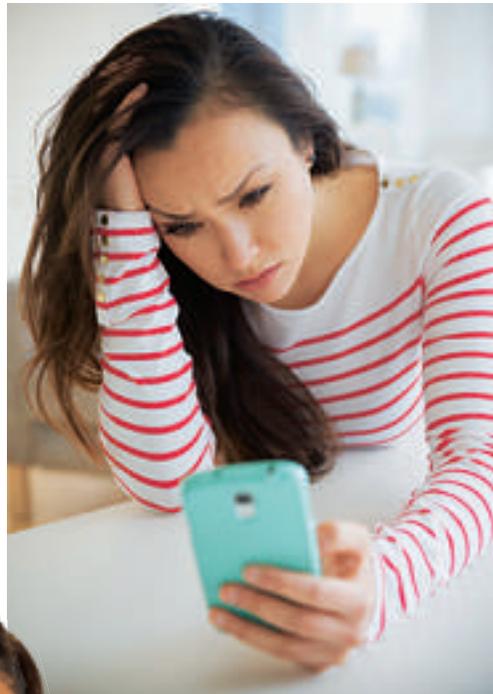
Suicidal tendencies can affect many of us. Following the collapse of her first marriage in 1997, actress Halle Berry, 52, tried to kill herself with carbon-monoxide fumes. She later revealed: 'I had an image of my mother finding me. She sacrificed so much for her children, and I realised that to end my life would be an incredibly selfish thing to do.'

Katie Price, 40, revealed that she wanted to end her life when she found out about Kieran Hayler's affair with her friend Jane Pountney in 2014. 'I was consumed by dark thoughts all of the time,' Katie said. 'I just didn't think I could carry on with life.'

Here, OK! takes a closer look at the issues that commonly trigger suicidal impulses in women, and finds out how we can all help make a difference...

WHY ARE SUICIDE RATES AMONG YOUNG WOMEN INCREASING?

Many health experts believe that the 'selfie culture' and striving for perfection are key factors. Jasmine El-Doori from Psychotherapy 4 You specialises in treating anxiety and tells OK!: 'There is growing concern that young women are more susceptible to images of female representation on social media. My feeling is that this has magnified an already inherent problem and provided a public forum for girls and young women to measure themselves



against each other.' But suicide also has other root causes, as Professor Rory O'Connor from the Suicidal Behaviour Research Laboratory at the University of Glasgow, explains: 'Social media is potentially one contributory factor, but triggers also include unemployment, relationship crises and financial troubles, as well as trauma and negative life events.'

WHY IS THE 20 TO 24 AGE GROUP SO SUSCEPTIBLE?

'The under-25 age group is particularly vulnerable as this is a time of being exposed to adult responsibilities,' Jasmine explains. 'These include getting through university, thinking about identity and fitting in, feeling the pressures of a career path and engaging in sexual relationships. The young women and men who struggle most tend to have in common chronically low self-esteem, a lack of self-worth and a destructive relationship with themselves.'

Ruth Sutherland, CEO of Samaritans, says self-harm is also an increased risk factor for suicide: 'Young women have higher rates of self-harm and, in England, 26 per cent of women



Above: Halle Berry and Katie Price (left) have both felt suicidal in the past. **Above left:** The 'selfie' culture and social comparison may play a part in rising suicide rates among young women

aged 16 to 24 have self-harmed compared to ten per cent of young men of the same age.'

WHAT DOES WORLD SUICIDE PREVENTION DAY AIM TO ACHIEVE?

Rory, who is vice president of the International Association for Suicide Prevention which organises the annual event, tells us: 'Suicide is still highly stigmatised, but across the globe people now come together on this day to remember loved ones and raise awareness.'

The theme this year is 'working together to prevent suicide', and that's so important because we all have a role to play. Only if we work together can we move forward with preventing suicide.'





As alcohol is a depressant, heavy drinking can increase the risk of suicide

WHAT SIGNS SHOULD WE LOOK FOR IN FAMILY OR FRIENDS WHO MAY BE FEELING SUICIDAL?

'A withdrawal from social activities and a lack of interest in work or study; isolation is a key factor,' Jasmine says. 'Also, be aware of extremes of emotion – anger, sadness, despair, apathy, and compulsive behaviours such as drug or alcohol abuse.'

She adds: 'Watch for people who talk about feeling hopeless or trapped, and who see no alternative. Suicidal people often don't actually want to die but want the unbearable pain to end. Alarm bells should ring if they talk about being a burden or say that nobody would care if they died.'

WHAT CAN YOU DO IF YOU'RE CONCERNED ABOUT SOMEONE?

'Research shows that feeling suicidal can be interrupted and that interrupting someone's thoughts can potentially save their life,' Ruth says.

These feelings can affect anyone – the late Diana, Princess of Wales was reported to have attempted suicide five times.

A LISTENING EAR

If you're worried about someone, follow Samaritans' SHUSH listening tips:

- Show you care – focus on the other person, make eye contact with them and put away your phone.
- Have patience – it may take time before they are ready to open up.
- Use open questions that need more than just a yes or no answer, and follow up by asking them to tell you more.
- Say it back, to check that you have understood them, but don't offer a solution.
- Have courage – don't be put off by a negative response or afraid of silence.

In some cases, further intervention may be necessary, and Jasmine advises: 'Make sure they stay with a friend or family member. Take them to see their GP and request a psychiatric referral. You can also go to any A&E department and ask for a psychiatric assessment. Also, contact your local mental health crisis team and make use of free helplines such as Samaritans. Lastly, find an accredited psychotherapist (www.bacp.co.uk), because a professional network of support is needed to contain both the fear and chaos of suicidal thoughts and feelings.'

OK!

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CALL SAMARITANS ON 116 123 OR CONSULT SAMARITANS.ORG. ALSO VISIT WWW.IASP.INFO/WSPD2018 AND WWW.PSYCHOTHERAPY4YOU.CO.UK.

FEATURE BY ANNA POINTER
PHOTOGRAPHS BY BBC, GETTY IMAGES,
INTHESTYLE.COM/INSTAGRAM, SHUTTERSTOCK



Diana, Princess of Wales is said to have suffered suicidal thoughts

HEALTHBITES

ALL THE LATEST HEALTH NEWS

BINKY'S BABY BODY

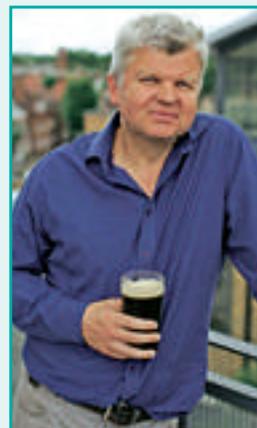
Getting candid about motherhood, Binky Felstead has opened up about her postnatal body. Sharing two pictures (right) – one taken two months after giving birth and the other



when her daughter India, now one, was 11 months – the former *Made In Chelsea* star, 28, wrote alongside the snaps: 'Exercise has played a big part in my postnatal recovery – not just the physical side, but also the mental side, as getting into the gym massively helps me in terms of boosting my energy, managing my anxiety and generally letting off some steam.'

ADRIAN'S BOOZE CONFESSION

Adrian Chiles (below) has opened up about the extent of his battle with booze after the release of his documentary, *Drinkers Like Me*. The presenter, 51, said: 'I've been drinking for 36 years since I was 15, more or less every day.' The TV personality says he realised his daily drinking had become a problem while filming the BBC show. He added of the



toll alcohol has taken on his body: 'I have four significant health issues – I'm a bit overweight and I take medication for high blood pressure, reflux and anxiety. It's likely I'd suffer a lot less with all of those things if I didn't drink.'

CHOCO-LICIOUS

Good news, chocolate lovers – the sweet treat could be good for your heart! A new study has found that eating three bars a month reduces your risk of heart failure, compared to those who don't eat any chocolate at all. It's said to be down to the natural compounds in cocoa which boost blood vessel health.



WIN A LUXURY LIR CHOCOLATES BUNDLE

OK! has teamed up with beloved Irish brand Lir Chocolates to give four lucky readers a chance to win a selection from its delectable range, worth £50 each. Its 16-piece Discovery Collection box features eight meticulously developed flavours and is available in selected Morrisons, Tesco and Co-op stores at £10. For more details, see www.lirchocolates.com.

For your chance to win, tell us the name of Jacqueline Jossa's eldest child.



Call 0901 154 2677 and leave your answer and details (calls cost 50p plus your network access charge). Text OKHEALTH followed by your answer, name and address to 84988 (texts cost 50p plus your usual network rate). Or enter via post by sending your answer, issue number (which can be found on the front of your magazine) and details on a postcard to OK! Health Comp, PO Box 12581, Sutton Coldfield B73 9BX. Terms and conditions: Competition closes at midnight on September 9, 2018, and three working days later for postal entries. Please ensure you provide your name, address and email details as incomplete entries may be charged but not entered. Entrants must be 18 or over. Winners will be selected at random from all correct entries. The editor's decision is final. For full T&Cs, see www.express.co.uk/comprules. Express Newspapers/TM Publishing 1 PLC reserves the right to offer these promotions in its portfolio of titles. Prizes are subject to availability. Images are for representational use only. SP: Spoke, 0333 202 3390.