

Living With Chronic Suicidal Ideation: What to Be Aware Of

Some people live with suicidal thoughts that come and go for months or years — sometimes daily. This is called chronic suicidal ideation, and it is more common than most people realize. Having these thoughts does not mean you will act on them, and it does not mean you are broken. It means you are carrying something heavy, often for a long time, and you deserve support for it.

What to be aware of

- **Know your pattern.** Notice when the thoughts get louder — certain seasons, anniversaries, stress, poor sleep, drinking. Patterns you can name are patterns you can plan around.
- **Watch for a shift, not just the presence.** With chronic ideation, the danger sign is often a change: thoughts becoming more specific, more frequent, more comforting, or starting to involve planning. That shift is the moment to reach out the same day.
- **Don't white-knuckle it alone.** Many people manage chronic thoughts silently for years. You don't have to be in crisis to deserve help.
- **Means safety matters even when you feel "fine."** Keeping distance from lethal means (medications, firearms) is protection for the version of you on your worst day.

What helps people live with this

- A written safety plan made while you're calm (see our action-plan guide on the attempt-survivor page).
- Ongoing therapy — approaches like CBT and DBT were built for exactly this.
- Reasons-for-living lists, connection, routine, sleep, and movement — boring, real, and effective.
- A crisis line saved in your phone. You can call 988 just to talk, no crisis required.

Important: This is education, not medical advice. Chronic ideation is treatable — a mental-health professional can help you build a life where the thoughts get quieter and less frequent.

In crisis or struggling? Call or text 988 (Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, free, 24/7) · Chat at 988lifeline.org

Beyond September™ is an awareness and education initiative — not a medical, therapy, or crisis service. This guide is general education, not medical advice.

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