



Feeling Suicidal?

If you have MCS or EHS or severe food intolerance (accumulatively known as Environmental Illness - EI), it is common to feel like you can't go on any more, that you can't endure the pain, isolation or horrendous way of life. It is normal to want everything to stop; for the pain and fear to go away.

You are going through a traumatic experience and these emotions are normal. People with EI often feel powerless to change anything because despite everything they have tried, nothing seems to change or get better.

We have heard from people living in tents, cars and sheds, as well as people living rough in the woods in an effort to make their awful symptoms more manageable. Normally with a chronic condition, people would be able to get some support from their GP, their friends or family or a specialist or social worker. With EI this is much more difficult and friends/ practitioners often don't understand the physical illness, let alone the emotional state that arises from trying to cope when you're reacting to everything.

The feeling that you can't do anything about your situation is common, and that well may be the case at this moment. When people with EI feel suicidal, usually they don't want to stop living, they just want their situation to stop being so awful and they can't see any other alternative. Please remember this time will pass. Your job is just to get through this moment however you can. You are NOT alone – we are here to help as best we can, and you matter very much to us.

What Can You Do?

Accept that you are feeling this way. Accept that things feel awful at this moment.

Is there a reason that life is particularly difficult at this time? What has triggered these feelings?

Is there anything practical that you can do to alleviate your pain right now?

Remember that MCS-Aware has helpsheets on all sorts of subjects. Re-read them as you may have missed something.

Talk to someone. As yet our charity doesn't have the funding for a telephone helpline, so instead:

- Take emotional support from the MCS-Aware magazine. If you can go online, then post on our website forum at www.mcs-aware.org. There are lots of people in the same circumstances as you who can offer a listening ear.
- If you can't go online, ask for a copy of our PenPal Directory and write to other people with MCS. However bad your situation, there will be someone worse, and they will be happy to share coping strategies.
- Write down your feelings honestly and with as much swearing as you like. Destroy the paper afterwards as creatively as feels good. Tearing up tissue paper is also helpful for those without strength. Write key words on the tissue first, or think them as you tear it up.
- At the end of this helpsheet there are suggestions for ways to improve your condition even if everything seems impossible. Please read on.

Are you in immediate danger?

If you feel like you are so depressed that you might try to end your life, then please take whatever steps you need now to keep yourself safe. Please tell someone, even if it is in the middle of the night. If you can use a phone then call the Samaritans. They will not know about MCS/ EHS but they do know about sadness, anger, helplessness, pain and coping with trauma. Numbers for the UK and Ireland are:

UK and ROI Phone: 116 123

Website: www.samaritans.org **E-mail Helpline:** jo@samaritans.org (24 Hour service)

To write: Freepost RSRB-KKBY-CYJK, Chris, PO Box 9090, Stirling, FK8 2SA.

HopeLine UK – 0800 068 4141 – for practical advice on suicide prevention. A 24 hr helpline offering emotional support for those dealing with suicide, depression or emotional distress.

In the U.S.: call 1-800-273-8255 National Suicide Prevention Lifeline.

In Australia call 13 11 14. Lifeline is a national charity providing all Australians experiencing a personal crisis with access to 24 hour crisis support and suicide prevention services.

In other countries there will be a dedicated helpline – look in your phone book or call Directory Enquiries. If you cannot use a telephone or computer, then please read on. You are not alone and you matter very much to us.

Why are you feeling like this?

- If you are not normally suicidal then what has changed? Have you had an overload of toxins in the last few days (perfume, flame retardants, weedkiller, a visit from someone, medication)? If your body is struggling with an increased amount of toxins (xenobiotics) then it can trigger mood swings. They will pass as the body processes and eliminates things.
- Have you started a new vitamin supplement or probiotic or digestive enzyme? All these things can bring about mood swings as they kill off unwanted bugs or release stored toxins, and if your body is struggling with a load of toxins at the moment then this can create feelings of helplessness and suicidal feelings. This is probably not an allergic reaction, but a sign that the supplements are working too well and causing changes too quickly for your body to handle. Slow down on the supplements by cutting the dose or stopping for a few days. When reactions stop you can start taking the supplements again but introduce them more slowly this time. Build up gradually.
- Are you reacting to something new in your home or office? Are you reacting to a new/ recent exposure to electromagnetic fields or Wi-Fi?
- Did you do some exercise in the last couple of days? If you have pushed your body physically/ started to sweat you will have stimulated the lymph system and started to empty your store of toxins in the body. If you can't eliminate the toxins they will just circulate until your body can put them back in storage. Take care of yourself for a few days until these feelings pass. Exercise can be good for you but start slowly. Do not push yourself until you have repaired your detoxification pathways.
- Could you be fighting off a virus or infection? Even if you don't have obvious symptoms your body may be working hard to fight off something. This is especially likely if you are feeling tired, and your

sensitivities are worse for no obvious reason. Be gentle with yourself for a few days until your body is back to normal.

- Could your gut flora be worse? Have you eaten more sugar, fruit, bread, yeast or alcohol than usual? If candida and other yeast/ fungal growths in the gut are fed too much sugar they grow and release toxins of their own, leading to mood swings, depression and cravings. If this is a suspected issue, ask for our helpsheet on Candida.

If your depression is due to an overload of toxins – either from internal or external sources, this will pass. If you do not normally feel suicidal, assume you are being affected by something you don't normally have to deal with. Label it: "These feelings are not my fault, they are likely to be because of XXX. And if I can gently get through this time I will feel better again."

Having some idea of what is causing this despair will help you to accept that these feelings are temporary and they are not your fault. As your body rebalances and gets rid of the trigger you will rebalance and return to how you felt before.

If your sensitivities are worse DO NOT PANIC. Do whatever you need to do to get through this bad patch. Sensitivities do not worsen for no reason. If you can't think of any trigger then it is probably because your body is fighting off an infection (without external symptoms). Make whatever changes you need to your home, diet and lifestyle to get through this bad patch. Be gentle with yourself as you would with an ill child. This will pass. How long it takes your body to recover depends on how ill you are and what the trigger is. Your body can react to something 48 hours after exposure.

Stress will make things worse.

Any form of stress on the body – emotional, physical, mental or environmental will make symptoms and emotions harder to deal with. Work out what you can do to lower this load. Stop watching negative programmes like the news or detective murders or real-life dramas. Watch, read or listen to things that lift your mood: comedies, comics, travel shows with beautiful scenery. While you are in this phase you are fragile. You need to take care of yourself.

MCS, EHS and food intolerance are traumatic. You never know what you are going to react to next and you can feel like you are never in control. This is enormously stressful. Your body cannot be in a stressed state (fight/ flight or freeze) and heal at the same time. When you are in a stress response your body shuts down your digestive and immune systems to divert energy to your flight/ flight response so you can fight or run away. You will also use up more B vitamins, magnesium etc that will then not be available to process toxins.

You cannot be in a stressful state AND heal. It's one or the other. If your life is stressful for whatever reason, then you need to make sure you plan some time-out EVERY DAY as many times as possible, for your body to have some healing time. An Epsom salts bath, a comedy programme, a call to a friend, a cuddle with a pet, a hobby, music or meditation will all help. This relaxation time is a vital part of your recovery. DO NOT let anything interfere with this time. Having a minimum of half an hour of de-stress time is as vital as any medication. This is one of the reasons the Annie Hopper and Ashok Gupta training programmes work for some people. They adjust your body out of the stress response so it can then start healing. 'Tapping' can also provide immediate benefit, see below.

Can't tolerate paper or ink?

If your health is particularly bad this is likely. It will pass as your body heals. In the meantime cover the paper with a sheet of Perspex (solid plastic that is not flexible) or glass. Make a reading box which can be as simple as a box with a glass cover to keep the fumes in (ask MCS-Aware for details). Try using artists felt tips to write – these are usually water-based and odourless (test carefully). Or use a propelling pencil. Acid free watercolour paper should be tolerable for writing. For more details ask for the MCS-Aware Suppliers Directory.

Depression

If you have recently had a virus or cold, or have been in hospital or some other place where you have had an overload of toxins, this will be enough to affect your mood. An overload of toxins/ electromagnetic fields or Wi-Fi can physically leave you feeling suicidal for no obvious reason as the toxins wreak havoc with your body chemistry. Be gentle with yourself. Do something that is a treat. This is a temporary state. It will pass. If you're bedbound listen to birdsong, or a favourite or therapeutic piece of music. Eat something nice, meditate or imagine going elsewhere for 20 minutes. How soon this passes will vary from each person, but nothing stays the same forever. Taking control of some aspect of your situation, even if it is just reading this, will empower you to get through this difficult moment. Start tapping to break the pattern of symptoms – see details below.

If you can access counselling then do it. Find someone who has experience of dealing with people with debilitating health conditions and trauma. Don't expect them to understand the particulars of MCS or EHS, but use them to talk about your emotions and general feelings of powerlessness, uselessness, frustration or pain. Talk about how you feel let down by the people around you and how they are making your life worse. Let it out. Call the Samaritans to talk through your frustration and pain (In UK or ROI tel. 116 123).

Make sure you are having enough of the vitamin supplements you need. Magnesium and calcium balance is important for stopping anxiety. If you're not sure, ask a nutritional therapist (not an NHS dietician – they won't know). Details of practitioners are available from MCS-Aware.

Tapping is a very good way to break the physical effects of mood and EI symptoms. It can help calm the limbic part of the brain that is responsible for survival. Tapping is also known as Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT). It involves tapping on acupuncture points and can make an immediate difference to all kinds of physical and emotional symptoms and trauma. If you are not able to access counselling or do not (or cannot) talk about your feelings then EFT is an excellent way of addressing pain without having to face it. Because this is such a powerful and simple technique for trauma we have included details at the end of this article.

Long Term Help - What can you do to improve your situation?

Emotionally: Get some support as above, join the MCS-Aware support group or an online MCS group. The MCS-Aware Support Group now offers Get Togethers where you can meet up and chat about things. Ask us for details.

Living Conditions: Check the MCS-Aware helpsheets and make sure your diet and environment are as low-toxin as possible; apply for Grants if you need monetary help. We have a helpsheet called 'Grants for Individuals', just ask.

Physically: Ask us for our list of practitioners. Or if you can't afford to see anyone or can't communicate, ask MCS-Aware for the helpsheet: *So You Have MCS, What Can You Do About It?*

Goals: If you're feeling useless or that your life is fairly pointless, please consider volunteering to help the MCS-Aware charity. We are able to accommodate most health conditions, whatever you can contribute. Think about fundraising. Even if you are bedbound you can do a sponsored silence/ wear a silly hat/ socks day. By helping the charity grow you will be helping yourself – think how wonderful it would be to have the resources for the charity to employ a housing advocate or a trained counsellor, or offer grants for DNA tests. You can make this happen. We need volunteers to keep the charity going.

Communication

When you are feeling depressed and suicidal it can help to talk to someone. If you can use a phone or computer then use it to contact one of the helplines below. You can use the MCS-Aware Facebook or website forum at www.mcs-aware.org although you may not get an immediate response. If you cannot use electrical equipment then ask to join the free MCS-Aware PenPal community so you can write to someone.

MCS-Aware does not have the funds for a telephone line at the present time (you can change that by fundraising). Below are some of the helplines that you can use if you need to. Calling people can be a great source of emotional support and get you through a temporary bad patch. However as none of these organisations are experts in MCS, you will also need to take some practical steps to improve your situation. Try not to get dependant on one person for help. If you are repeatedly calling an individual for emotional help, then you need to share the load - try one of the helplines below. If you are not able to use a computer or speakerphone please ask MCS-Aware for the helpsheet: 'Useful Organisations' which has addresses.

25% ME group Voluntary group. Provide a range of services to people affected by severe M.E. Twice yearly newsletter and advocacy service. Advocacy helpline for members: 0141 570 2938 E. enquiry@25megroup.org 25% M.E. Group, 21 Church Street, Troon, Ayrshire, KA10 6HT www.25megroup.org

Action for ME Free advice on welfare and support services t: 0800 138 6544
E: welfare@actionforme.org.uk www.actionforme.org.uk

Allergy UK National charity with phone helpline for allergies. Not specific to MCS but can be helpful and some advisors do know about mild MCS issues. 01322 619898. The Helpline operates from 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday. www.allergyuk.org

ChildLine is a counselling service for children and young people. Phone 0800 1111, or [send an email](#), have a [1-2-1 chat](#), [send a message to Ask Sam](#) and you can post messages to the [ChildLine message boards](#). You can contact ChildLine about anything - no problem is too big or too small. If you are feeling scared or out of control or just want to talk to someone you can contact ChildLine.

ElectroSensitivity UK Support group for electro-sensitivity. Free magazine. Telephone helpline: 0845 643 9748 (charged at 7p/ minute). Calls will be logged and passed to a volunteer and you may not hear back for 48 hours. E. enquirers@es-uk.info. All emails will be acknowledged within 24 hours of receipt and provide you with the fastest way of receiving a response from ES-UK. Letters: BM Box ES-UK, London, WC1N 3XX. Allow 7-14 business days for a response. <http://es-uk.info>

Samaritans Provides a listening ear without advice. You do not have to be suicidal to phone them, they are very helpful for working through emotions, and venting. Call free any time, UK and ROI on 116 123. Open 24 hours every day of the year. E. jo@samaritans.org or call in to your local branch www.samaritans.org

More information:

Identity, Self and Psychology in Multiple Chemical Sensitivity By Pamela Reed Gibson, James Madison University: <http://www.ei-resource.org/articles/multiple-chemical-sensitivity-articles/identity-self-and-psychology-in-multiple-chemical-sensitivity/> Or request a printed copy of '*Understanding & Accommodating People with Multiple Chemical Sensitivity in Independent Living*' by Pamela Reed Gibson from MCS-Aware

<https://www.helpguide.org/articles/suicide-prevention/suicide-help-dealing-with-your-suicidal-thoughts-and-feelings.htm> Ask for a printed copy from MCS-Aware if you need it.

Basic Tapping Sequence (Emotional Freedom Technique)

As discussed, Tapping can be used for both mental and physical symptoms. It involves tapping your fingers on specific acupressure points. In this example, we'll focus on general anxiety, and at the end of this article there are specific ways to use this technique for suicidal feelings. You can also use this technique on physical symptoms which can help to turn off reactions which is printed at the end. A word of caution. In an ideal situation we would recommend seeing an EFT Practitioner to guide you through this process, however for many people with MCS and EHS we know this simply won't be possible. Therefore if you are trying EFT for the first time in an emergency, please go **gently**. EFT can bring up some strong emotions. If at any time you feel intense emotions, keep tapping and breathing - even if you're crying and can't speak. The emotions usually pass. If you have strong, painful emotions get guidance from an EFT practitioner.

Try it now with this initial sequence. Here's how a basic Tapping sequence works:

- Identify the problem you want to focus on. It can be general anxiety, or it can be a specific situation or issue which causes you to feel anxious.
- Consider the problem or situation. How do you feel about it right now? Rate the intensity level of your anxiety/ pain, with zero being the lowest level of anxiety/ pain and ten being the highest.
- Compose your set-up statement. Your set-up statement should acknowledge the problem you want to deal with, then follow it with an unconditional affirmation of yourself as a person. Examples specific to MCS are at the end of this article.

Here are some affirmations to use in daily life:

"Even though I feel this anxiety, I deeply and completely accept myself."

"Even though I'm feeling this anxiety about my financial situation, I deeply and completely accept myself."

"Even though I panic when I think about _____, I deeply and completely accept myself. "

"Even though I'm worried about how to approach my boss, I deeply and completely accept myself."

"Even though I'm anxious about my interview, I deeply and completely accept myself."

"Even though I'm having trouble breathing, I deeply and completely accept myself."

- Perform the set up. Please refer to the picture below:

With four fingers on one hand, tap the Karate Chop point on your other hand. The Karate Chop point is on the outer edge of the hand, on the opposite side from the thumb – see picture below.

Repeat the set up statement three times aloud, while simultaneously tapping the Karate Chop point. Now take a deep breath.

Get ready to begin tapping. Here are some tips to help you achieve the right technique.

- You should use a firm but gentle pressure, as if you were drumming on the side of your desk or testing a melon for ripeness.
- You can use all four fingers, or just the first two (the index and middle fingers). Four fingers are generally used on the top of the head, the collarbone, under the arm... wider areas. On sensitive areas, like around the eyes, you can use just two.
- Tap with your fingertips, not your fingernails. The sound will be round and mellow. If tapping hurts, instead of tapping, just gently touch and hold your fingers at the point for the space of at least one slow breath.



① KC: karate chop

⑨ TH: top of head

EB: eyebrow ②

SE: side of eye ③

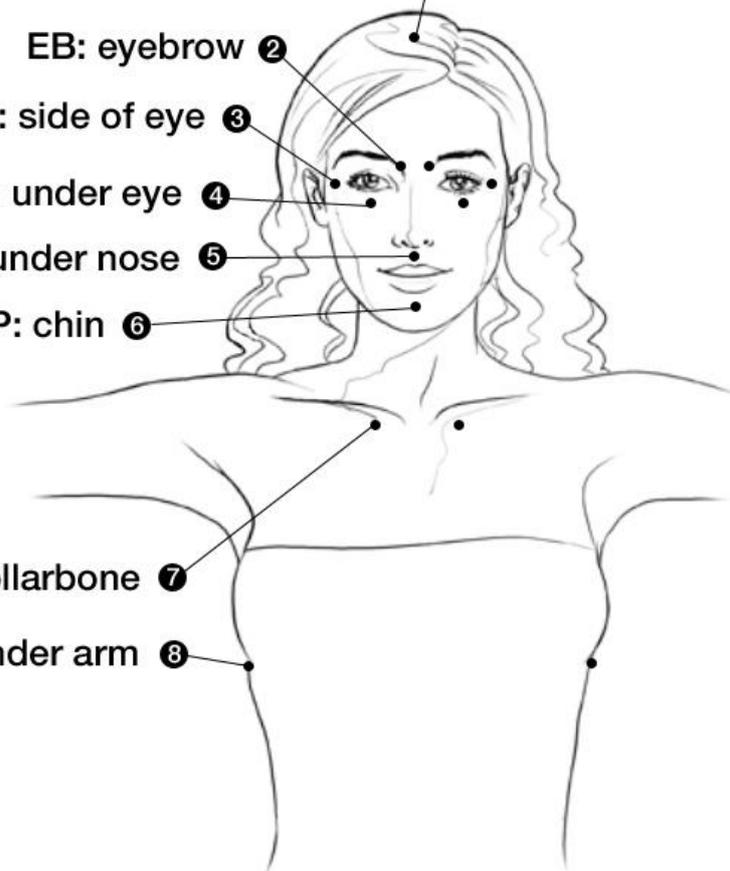
UE: under eye ④

UN: under nose ⑤

CP: chin ⑥

CB: collarbone ⑦

UA: under arm ⑧



The tapping order begins at the top and works down. You can end by returning to the top of the head, to complete the loop. Now, tap 5-7 times each on the remaining eight points in the following sequence:

Head (TH): The crown, centre and top of the head. Tap with all four fingers on both hands.

Eyebrow (EB): The inner edges of the eyebrows, closest to the bridge of the nose. Use two fingers.

Side of eye (SE): The hard area between the eye and the temple. Use two fingers. Feel out this area gently so you don't poke yourself in the eye!

Under eye (UE): The hard area under the eye, that merges with the cheekbone. Use two fingers, in line beneath the pupil.

Under nose (UN): The point centered between the bottom of the nose and the upper lip. Use two fingers.

Chin (CP): This point is right beneath the previous one, and is centered between the bottom of the lower lip and the chin.

Collarbone (CB): Tap just below the hard ridge of your collarbone with four fingers.

Underarm (UA): On your side, about four inches beneath the armpit. Use four fingers.

Head (TH): And back where you started, to complete the sequence.

As you tap on each point, repeat a simple reminder phrase, such as “my anxiety” or “my interview” or “my financial situation.”

Now take another deep breath!

- Now that you’ve completed the sequence, focus on your problem again. How intense is the anxiety now, in comparison to a few minutes ago? Give it a rating on the same number scale.
- If your anxiety is still higher than “2”, you can do another round of tapping. Keep tapping until the anxiety is gone. You can change your set up statement to take into account your efforts to fix the problem, and your desire for continued progress. “Even though I have some remaining anxiety, I deeply and completely accept myself.” “Even though I’m still a little worried about this interview, I deeply and completely accept myself.” And so on.
- Now that you’ve focused on dispelling your immediate anxiety, you can work on installing some positive feelings instead.

Note: This approach is different from traditional “positive thinking.” You’re not being dishonest with yourself. You’re not trying to obscure the stress and anxiety inside yourself with a veneer of insincere affirmations. Rather, you’ve confronted and dealt with the anxiety and negative feelings, offering deep and complete acceptance to both your feelings and yourself. Now, you’re turning your thoughts and vibrations to the powerful and positive. That’s what makes Tapping so much more effective than the “positive thinking” techniques that many of you have already tried. It’s not just a mental trick; instead, you’re using these positive phrases and tapping to tune into the very real energy of positivity, affirmation, and joy that is implicit inside you. You’re actually changing your body’s energy into a more positive flow, a more positive vibration.

The method above was taken from the website: <http://www.thetappingsolution.com/what-is-eft-tapping/>

Not Working?

EFT can have a learning curve for some people. Not everyone has success/results right away but some people do have immediate relief - especially for emotional pain. If it does not work at first, it can be due to incorrect tapping points, wording that doesn't work well for you or, possibly, due to being under-hydrated. Drinking water is very important. If tapping hurts, instead of tapping, just gently touch and hold your fingers at the point for the space of at least one slow breath.

Here are some of the set-up phrases that might be useful for people who are struggling with suicidal thoughts.

- Even though I have these suicidal thoughts, I am willing to live some more.

- Even though I have these suicidal thoughts, I am really willing to live some more and I am willing to find reasons to continue with my life.
- Even though I feel like that I have nothing to live for with this illness, I am willing to let go and find other reasons to live.
- Even though I feel so unhappy, I am willing to live for something that brings me happiness.
- Even though I feel no real reason to live anymore, I am choosing to make a new start and find interesting things to do again.
- Even though I feel that I have no real purpose in life any longer, I am willing to find a new purpose in my life.
- Even though I am so unhappy about losing my friends and family, I am choosing to love myself and I am choosing to see that I am the most important person in my life.
- Even though I feel so heart-broken from this break-up, I choose to deeply love and accept myself.
- Even though I thought that this was the right person for the rest of my life, I am willing to let go and to find new friends.

Practitioner Natalie Hill, has created a tapping script specifically for chemical sensitivity. It is available online and as a free audio recording and video at:

<http://efttappingtechniques.com/physical-issues/eft-tapping-script-chemical-sensitivity/>

- Even though there's still a part of me that believes that I have to be sensitive, there's also a part of me that believes that I can become stronger and more resilient, and I'm supporting that part of me.
- Even though there still a part of me that doubts tapping can make any difference, I choose to go forward with positive expectation.
- Even though I know that my body, is especially sensitive to chemicals. I deeply and completely love and accept every bit of me.
- Even though I have this reaction to [brand name], I ask my body to safely process [brand name] and all its ingredients.... I ask my body to safely process these toxins.
- I give my body full permission to easily process and eliminate in a healthy and safe way, any chemicals that come my way. And I give such gratitude for these things happening inside me now.

Another useful website is www.emofree.com which has a lot of good information about tapping.

EFT is not a substitute for medical care from your conventional or alternative doctor, but is a powerful addition to other forms of treatment. EFT does not have any harmful interactions with prescription medications or supplements. We care about you. If you are in danger of ending your life now, please phone the Samaritans immediately: In UK and ROI please call 116 123. It is free.