My name is Whakamate, you can call me Suicide.
So who am I...

“I am an opportunistic thief hiding quietly, everywhere and no where. I am patient, silent and deadly. I can arrive and be gone long before you even realize I have visited at all.

I come only for the souls of the spiritually blind, the lost and distressed; the dejected and the disturbed, the lonely and the abandoned. I come for you in your moment of greatest need.

I am neither friend nor foe, and do not care nor ask why you wish to surrender. I do not judge you by the color of your skin, the smell of your money, the state of your castle, or the name of your God.

I am simply here to take away all your troubles and to lighten your load; to help you forget what burdens your soul, and to ease your pain when nothing and nobody else can do it.

I can offer you salvation when all else looks bleak. You do not need to fear me, come, let me comfort you...” (Anon).
Suicide in New Zealand

- Whakamate-suicide and suicidal behaviours are a major health and social issue in Aotearoa New Zealand
- Over 500 people commit suicide every year
- Over 5,000 engage in self harm that does not result in death but raises the threshold of harm related injuries
- The elderly are a growing group choosing suicide
- Maori youth are particularly at risk and
- Men are over represented in the suicide numbers but females are over represented in the self harm group
Has suicide always existed....

• Yes
• Since the beginning of time suicide has always existed on the continuum and will always exist as a choice for some
• Did Maori suicide – the short answer is YES they did and do
• Did Pakeha suicide – the short answer is YES they did and do
• Did Tauiwi suicide – Yes yes yes, suicide is and has always been part of the human journey
• Why even today we are beginning the conversation around ASSISTED SUICIDE in NZ – SO UNDERSTANDING SUICIDE IS EVERYONE’S BUSINESS NO MATTER YOUR VIEW.
Why do people commit suicide...

• There are many reasons why....
  • Those that have suffered a spiritual wounding
  • Those that have experienced an accumulation of loss...
  • Those that lack resilience and problem solving skills
  • Those that are rendered emotionally or psychologically fragile
  • Those for whom life has lost all trace of colour, hope or future
  • Those who have been overcome by a physical pain prematurely and for which there may be no cure
  • Those people who have lived a good and rich life and wish to leave this earthly experience for a spiritual one
  • Other and other and other
What to look for...

Individuals who:

- appear ‘hollow’ or lacking in substance (appear to have no purpose, care or concern for anything beyond immediate self gratification)
- appear to exist on the periphery of life rather than living a life
- have become weakened and overwhelmed by adversity (give up easily on things; can’t seem to organise their daily lives; exist in chaos rather than calm; have lost control on all levels)
- talk ‘dead talk’
- have made attempts at suicide before (may have started at an early age)
- are emotionally and psychologically fragile (constantly needy; may be self medicating with drugs/alcohol; roll from one drama to the next)
- have had a catastrophic event/experience
- have a family history of suicide or self harm as a response mechanism to the jagged trauma/s of life including intergenerational wounding/s
- Other and other and other
What to do if you suspect someone is suicidal..

- Talk to them
- Talk to others
- Ask questions of them
- Ask questions of others
- Join the dots if you can and seek support and help to manage the concern
- Do not be afraid of being wrong and acting in their best interest
- Be afraid of being right and not having acted at all!
Break the Silence