

How You Can Play a Role in Preventing Suicide

2012 National Strategy for Suicide Prevention: How You Can Play a Role in Preventing Suicide

The effects of suicide are not limited to those who die. Suicide is a serious public health problem that has shattered the lives of millions of people, families, and communities nationwide. We can all take action to reduce its toll. A variety of strategies are available for individuals and organizations across the United States to help prevent suicide.

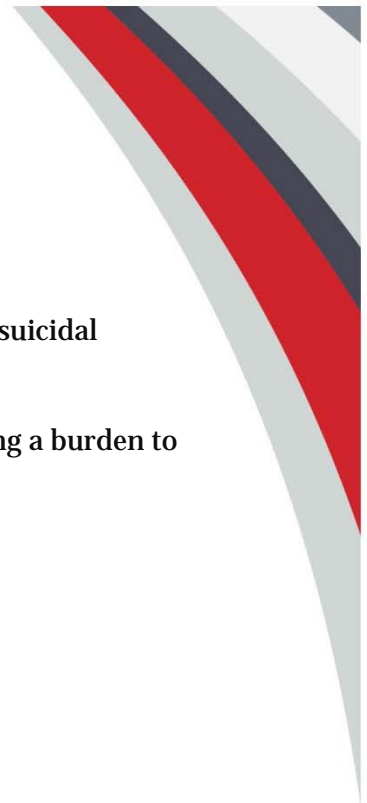
FACTS ABOUT SUICIDE

- Suicide is the 10th leading cause of death in the United States, claiming more than twice as many lives each year as homicides. ⁱ
- On average, more than 33,000 Americans died each year between 2001 and 2009 as a result of suicide—more than 1 person every 15 minutes. ⁱⁱ
- More than 8 million adults reported having serious suicidal thoughts in the past year, 2.5 million people reported making a suicide plan in the past year, and 1.1 million reported a suicide attempt in the past year. ⁱⁱⁱ
- Nearly 16 percent of students in grades 9 to 12 report having seriously considered suicide, and 7.8 percent report having attempted suicide once or more in the past 12 months. ^{iv}

Although suicide can affect anyone, the following populations are known to have an increased risk for suicidal behaviors:

- Individuals with mental and/or substance use disorders;
- Individuals bereaved by suicide;
- Individuals in justice and child welfare settings;
- Individuals who engage in nonsuicidal self-injury;
- Individuals who have attempted suicide;
- Individuals with medical conditions;
- Individuals who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGBT);
- American Indians/Alaska Natives;
- Members of the Armed Forces and veterans;
- Men in midlife; and
- Older men.





WARNING SIGNS OF SUICIDAL BEHAVIORS

Everyone can play a role in preventing suicide by being aware of the warning signs of suicidal behaviors:

- Talking about wanting to die; feeling hopeless, trapped, or in unbearable pain; being a burden to others;
- Looking for a way to kill oneself;
- Increasing the use of alcohol or drugs;
- Acting anxious, agitated, or reckless;
- Sleeping too little or too much;
- Withdrawing or feeling isolated;
- Showing rage or talking about seeking revenge; and
- Displaying extreme mood swings.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

If you believe someone is at risk of suicide:

- Ask them if they are thinking about killing themselves. (This will *not* put the idea into their heads, or make it more likely that they will attempt suicide.);
- Call the U.S. National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 800-273-TALK (8255);
- Take the person to an emergency room or seek help from a medical or mental health professional;
- Remove any objects that could be used in a suicide attempt; and
- If possible, do not leave the person alone.

RESOURCES

For additional information about the National Strategy for Suicide Prevention, visit:

- <http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/reports/national-strategy-suicide-prevention/index.html>
- <http://www.samhsa.gov/nssp>
- <http://www.actionallianceforsuicideprevention.org/NSSP>
- <http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org>
- <http://www.sprc.org>

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ⁱ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Fatal Injury Data, 2009. Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System. Available at <http://www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/fatal.html>. Accessed January 12, 2012.

ⁱⁱ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Fatal Injury Data, 2009. Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System. Available at <http://www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/fatal.html>. Accessed January 12, 2012.

ⁱⁱⁱ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. *Utilization of mental health services by adults with suicidal thoughts and behavior*. (National Survey on Drug Use and Health. The NSDUH Report.) Rockville, MD: Author; 2011.

^{iv} Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Youth risk behavior surveillance—United States, 2011. *MMWR*. 2012;61(4) 1-162#



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