SUICIDE AWARENESS AND PREVENTION

A resource guide for support and hope



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You are not alone

Suicide is the 11th leading cause of death in America – and the second for ages 10-34. Whether you or someone you know has been affected by suicide, deaths and attempts can create ripples of grief, trauma and guilt.

Many experts believe that suicide can be prevented by understanding the risk factors and focusing on prevention strategies that reduce the likelihood of someone attempting or completing suicide. This guide provides risk-reduction tips to help you support loved ones in need and to boost education and understanding on the topic of suicide.

In this guide

3 National suicide statistics

4 Suicide risk and protective factors

5 Recognizing and responding to suicide warning signs

6 Strategies to prevent suicide

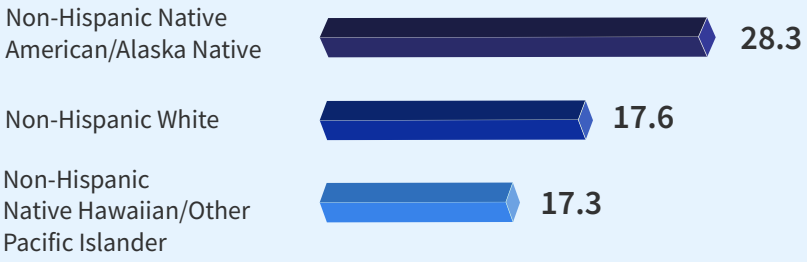
7 Additional resources



National suicide statistics

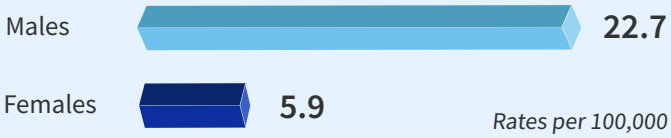
Suicide isn't just an epidemic among individuals with a mental illness. It can affect anyone, regardless of gender, age, race or socioeconomic background. However, some groups may be at greater risk for suicide.

Race/Ethnicity[1]



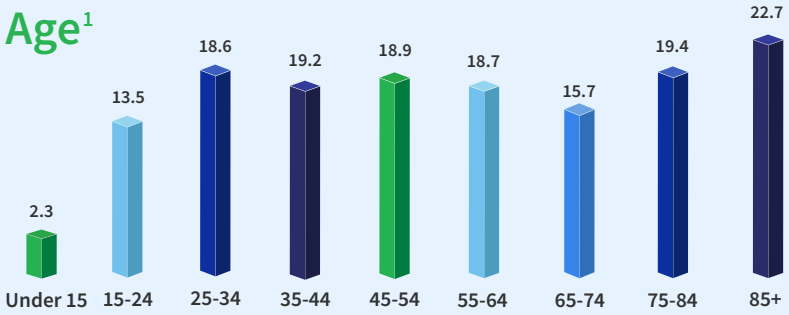
Other racial/ethnic groups at greater risk for suicide:
Non-Hispanic Multiracial | Non-Hispanic Black | Hispanic | Non-Hispanic Asian

Gender[1]



Rates per 100,000

Age[1]



Age group

Rates per 100,000

Industry[1]

Mining, quarrying, oil and gas extraction

Males: 54.2 per 100,000

Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting

Males: 36.1 per 100,000

Construction

Males: 45.3 per 100,000

Transportation and warehousing

Males: 29.8 per 100,000
Females: 10.1 per 100,000



[1] CDC Suicide Data Statistics
[2] The Trevor Project
[3] Pew Research Center
[4] American Foundation for Suicide Prevention

Suicide risk and protective factors

Suicide risk factors

A range of factors can increase suicide risk. Simply being exposed to these factors doesn't mean someone will contemplate or attempt suicide; it increases the likelihood that they may die by suicide.



Individual

- Previous suicide attempt
- History of depression and other mental illnesses
- Serious illnesses such as chronic pain
- Criminal/legal problems
- Job/financial problems or loss
- Substance use
- Trauma, history of adverse childhood experiences

Relationship

- Bullying
- Family/loved one's history of suicide
- High conflict or violent relationships
- Social isolation

Community

- Lack of access to health care
- Suicide cluster in the community
- Stress of cultural changes
- Community violence
- Historical trauma
- Discrimination

Societal

- Stigma associated with help-seeking and mental illness
- Easy access to lethal means
- Unsafe media portrayals of suicide



Suicide protective factors

Protective factors are resources, attributes or conditions that reduce the likelihood of someone attempting or completing suicide. The effectiveness of protective factors was demonstrated throughout the COVID-19 pandemic – when risk factors increased, but better access to mental health support contributed to a decrease in the overall suicide rate. Examples of protective factors include:

Individual

- Problem-solving skills
- Connection to others
- Resiliency
- Coping skills
- Cultural, religious or spiritual beliefs



- Variety and choice of resources to support mental health
- Reduced access to lethal means
- Access to immediate mental health support
- Reasons for living
- Optimism and hope

Recognizing and responding to suicide warning signs



It can be frightening when a family member, friend or co-worker shows signs of suicidal thoughts. While it may be out of your comfort zone, one conversation could mean the difference between life and death.

Know the warning signs.

Many who attempt or die by suicide will show warning signs.

- Talking about wanting to die or to kill oneself
- Looking for a way to kill oneself
- Talking about feeling hopeless or having no purpose
- Talking about feeling trapped or being in unbearable pain
- Talking about being a burden to others
- 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
- Displaying extreme mood swings

Start the conversation.

Keep in mind – talking about suicide won't prompt someone to act. Instead, your concern in asking about it can help relieve some of their pain or tension, rethink their options and seek help.

Find a private time and space to talk. Ask open-ended questions like, "I've noticed you're not your usual self. Are you OK? Is there anything I can do to help?" then let them speak without judgment or interruption.

Encourage the next step.

Someone experiencing a mental health concern like suicidal thoughts often needs more support than you can provide. Encourage a co-worker or immediate family member to reach out to their employee assistance program if they have one, the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (call or text 988) or help them make a connection with a mental health professional.



Check in.

Staying in touch a few days after a conversation about mental health or suicide can help the person struggling know that you care and can make a real difference in their life. Ask how they are doing and if they were able to take the next step in getting additional help and remind them you're available to listen.

Strategies to prevent suicide

Suicide is preventable. When you learn prevention and resilience strategies, you can make a difference.

Here are a few steps you can use to communicate with a family member, friend, co-worker or roommate who may be having suicidal thoughts.

ASK

Start the conversation by asking questions like, "Are you thinking about suicide?" in a direct, non-judgmental manner. Other questions you can ask include, "How are you hurting?" or "How can I help?"

BE THERE

Whether or not you can be physically present for someone who is experiencing thoughts of suicide, you can still support them. Speak with them on the phone, video chat or text message to show your support. Simply listening can help the other person feel **heard and cared for.**

KEEP THEM SAFE

Once you've determined suicide is an active concern, work to establish immediate safety. **If you or someone you know is having thoughts of suicide, call the toll-free National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (1-800-273-8255) or dial or text 988**, 24 hours a day, seven days a week or **visit the website**. If someone is in immediate need or it is an emergency, dial 911 immediately.

HELP THEM CONNECT

Connecting the person to ongoing support can help them establish a safety net. Explore resources with them. Are they currently seeing a mental health professional, or is this an option for them? Are there other mental health resources in the community that can effectively help?

FOLLOW UP

After your initial conversation, continue checking in with the person. Leave messages, send texts or set a time to call them again. This type of contact can continue to increase their feelings of connectedness.



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Additional resources

If warning signs are observed, contact the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline by texting or calling **988** or calling **1-800-273-8255**. Or visit **988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline**.

For more information regarding the causes of suicide and prevention strategies, visit the **American Association of Suicidology**.

To find the best evidence to prevent or reduce public health problems such as suicide, review the CDC's **Preventing Suicide: A Technical Package of Policy, Programs and Practices.**

If you or someone you know has lost someone to suicide, visit the **Grief and Loss Toolkit** for resources to support you during your journey through grief.

Additionally, guidance, support and resources are available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year by calling your EAP program or visiting the web portal, which provides additional resources for various concerns.