



Preventing suicide

Suicide is a leading cause of death in the U.S. More people die from suicides than from homicides or car crashes. Suicide is a public health concern. The topic is not easy to discuss. But we are now more aware of its effects on families and communities. And the need to talk about it.

Prevention is possible. It helps to know the risk factors. And who is most at risk. There are ways to get help.

Who is most at risk?

- Adults age 45-54.
- Young adults age 15- 29.
- Older adults.
- Active or retired military personnel.
- American Indians/Alaska natives
- People in rural areas.

It is also more common in men than in women.

What are the risk factors?

- Depression or other mental illness.
- Alcohol or drug abuse.
- Prior suicide attempts.
- Family history of suicide.
- Family violence.
- Physical illness.
- Guns in the home.
- Being in jail.
- Seeing suicidal behavior in others.

More risk factors for teens:

- Being neglected or abused.
- Being bullied.
- A history of hurting themselves.
- Suicides of other young people.
- Relationship breakups.

Note: People may have risk factors but are not at risk of attempting suicide.

What are the warning signs?

People at risk of suicide may:

- Talk about wanting to die.
- Talk about being a burden to others.
- Give away their possessions.
- Feel alone or hopeless.
- Feel trapped or in pain.
- Increase alcohol or drug use.
- Sleep too little or too much.
- Be agitated or reckless.
- Withdraw from others.
- Show rage.
- Talk about getting revenge.
- Have mood swings.

Suicide is a sign of extreme distress. It is not a harmless bid for attention.

What can you do for yourself or someone you care about?

Get help right away if you are in crisis. Call 1-800-273-TALK (8255). The call is free. You will reach the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. Someone is there 24 hours a day, every day. The service is open to anyone. You may call for yourself. Or for someone you care about. Calls are confidential.

Resources

- American Association of Suicidology (AAS): www.suicidology.org
- American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP): www.afsp.org
- National Center for Injury Prevention and Control (NCIPC)/Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention
 - CDC Facebook page on violence prevention: www.facebook.com/vetoviolence
- National Institute for Mental Health (NIMH): www.nimh.nih.gov
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA): www.samhsa.gov
- Suicide Awareness Voices of Education (SAVE): www.save.org
- Suicide Prevention Resource Center (SPRC): www.sprc.org

Content of this document has been adapted from the websites of the National Institute of Mental Health (www.nimh.nih.gov) and the Centers for Disease Control (www.cdc.gov).

This document is for your information only. It is not meant to give medical advice. It should not be used to replace a visit with a provider. Magellan Health does not endorse other resources that may be mentioned here.