

SUICIDE PREVENTION

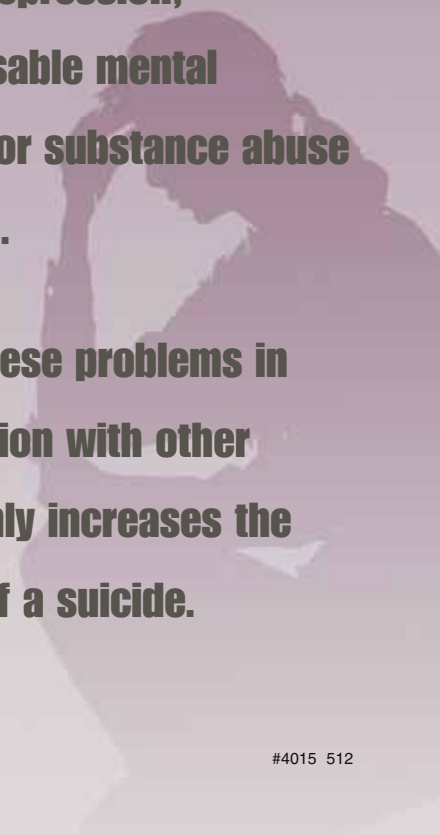
*Know the Signs.
Know How to Help.*



Approximately 30,000 people in the United States commit suicide each year. It is the third leading cause of death for people 10-24 years of age.

More than 90% of people who commit suicide have clinical depression, a diagnosable mental disorder or substance abuse problems.

Having these problems in combination with other issues only increases the chance of a suicide.



Suicide is becoming a national epidemic.

For every two people killed by homicide, three people die of suicide.

Many who attempt suicide never seek professional care. So it's important to recognize those at risk and ensure that they get the help that they need.

What are the warning signs and symptoms for suicide?

- A change in eating and sleeping habits
- Withdrawal from friends, family and regular activities
- Violent or rebellious behavior
- Drug and alcohol abuse
- Radical personality change
- Loss of interest in pleasurable activities
- Unusual neglect of personal appearance
- Comments about being hopeless, helpless, or worthless
- Putting affairs in order, making a will or tying up loose ends like visiting or calling people to say goodbye
- Showing bipolar tendencies – going from being very sad to being very calm or happy
- Talking about death
- Taking life-threatening risks, such as driving through red lights

What are some risk factors that increase the chance for suicide?

- Severe depression
- One or more prior suicide attempts
- Substance abuse
- History of mental disorder or family history of mental disorder
- Family history of suicide
- Family violence
- Physical or sexual abuse

- Chronic physical illness, such as chronic pain
- Incarceration

What should I do if someone is showing signs of suicide?

If someone tells you that they are considering suicide, take them seriously. Listen to what the person is saying. Ask what they are planning to do and why. However, don't attempt to argue or talk them out of committing suicide. Rather, let the person know you care and understand and you are listening. If they appear to be in imminent danger of suicide, do not leave them alone. Remove any drugs or weapons they could use.

Seek immediate help from a health care professional.

Call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255) or the National Hopeline Network at 1-800-SUICIDE (1-800-784-2433). These toll-free crisis hotlines offer 24-hour suicide prevention and support. Your call is free and confidential.

Ways to cope with suicidal thoughts and feelings:

- **Talk with someone every day**, preferably face to face, like trusted friends. Or call a crisis helpline and talk about your feelings.
- **Make a safety plan** by developing steps to take during a suicidal crisis, including contact numbers for your



doctor or therapist as well as friends and family members who will help in an emergency.

- **Make a daily schedule** and keep a regular routine as much as possible even when your feelings seem out of control.
- **Get outside** and enjoy nature for at least 30 minutes every day.
- **Exercise.** Even short amounts of activity, like three 10-minute bursts of activity, can have a positive effect on mood.
- **Make time for things that bring you joy.** Even if very few things bring you pleasure at the moment, force yourself to do the things you used to enjoy.
- **Remember your personal goals.** You may have always wanted to travel to a particular place, read a specific book, own a pet, move to another place, learn a new hobby, volunteer, go back to school, or start a family.

Things to avoid

- **Being alone.** Solitude can make suicidal thoughts even worse. Visit a friend, or family member. If you have no one to talk to, pick up the phone and call a crisis helpline.
- **Alcohol and drugs.** They can increase depression, hamper your problem-solving ability, and make you act impulsively.
- **Doing things that make you feel worse.** Listening to sad music, looking at old photographs, or visiting a loved one's grave can increase negative feelings.
- **Thinking about suicide and other negative thoughts.** Being preoccupied with suicidal thoughts can make them stronger. Don't rethink negative thoughts. Find a distraction. Giving yourself something else to think about can help, even if it's for a short time.