

SUICIDE

Suicide is not explained by any single cause, but instead a range of factors - beyond mental health conditions alone - including relationships, substance misuse, physical health, job, financial, and legal problems. Suicide prevention needs to be addressed through a robust, coordinated, multi-sector approach that **combines healthcare system efforts with community efforts**. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Information About Suicide

- 48,000 people died by suicide in 2021
- 1 death by suicide in the U.S. every 11 minutes
- In 2021, an estimated 12.3 million adults seriously thought about suicide, 3.5 million made a plan, and 1.7 million attempted suicide.
- 2nd leading cause of death for ages 10-14 & 20-34
- Suicide rates in 2021 were 36% higher than in 2000.

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Suicide Warning Signs

- Feeling like a burden
- Isolation, social withdrawal from friends, family, and community
- Personality changes including increased anxiety, anger, or rage
- Feeling trapped or in unbearable pain
- Increased substance misuse
- Looking for a way to access lethal means
- Extreme mood swings, impulsive behavior
- Expressing hopelessness, lack of interest in future plans, or giving possessions away
- Sleeping too little or too much
- Talking or posting about wanting to die
- Making plans for suicide

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Risk Factors for Suicide

- Loss & other events (death, financial or legal difficulties, relationship breakup, bullying)
- Previous suicide attempts
- Living with mental illness
- History of trauma, abuse, or violence
- Access to lethal means (firearms, drugs)
- Chronic physical illness, chronic pain
- Loss of hope
- History of suicide in the family
- Exposure to graphic accounts of suicide

American Psychiatric Association Foundation

Effective Strategies for Prevention

- Safe storage of drugs and firearms
- Establish more “connectedness”
- Teach coping and problem-solving skills

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5 Steps to Help Someone at Risk for Suicide

1. Ask if they are thinking about suicide
2. Keep them safe - remove lethal means
3. Don't leave them alone
4. Connect them to emergency services (988)
5. Follow up

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| Communication Issues | Problematic Terminology | Preferred Terminology |
|---|---|---|
| Language that represents suicide as a desirable outcome | “Successful suicide” | “Took their own life,” “Ended their own life,” “Died by suicide” |
| Phrases that associate suicide with crime or sin | “Commit suicide,” “Complete suicide,” “Committed suicide” | “Died by suicide,” “Took their own life” |
| Language that glamorizes a suicide attempt | “Failed suicide,” “Suicide bid for attention,” “Unsuccessful suicide” | “Made an attempt on his life,” “Suicide attempt,” “Non-fatal attempt” |
| Phrases that sensationalize suicide | “Suicide epidemic” | “Higher rates,” “Increasing rates,” “Concerning rates” |
| Gratuitous use of the word “suicide” out of context | “Suicide mission,” “Suicide pass,” “Political suicide” | Refrain from using the word “suicide” out of context |

American Association of Suicidology

988 | Suicide & Crisis Lifeline

Thoughts of suicide should always be taken seriously. A person who is **actively suicidal** is in a psychiatric emergency. **Call 911.**

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Quotes by Kay and Rick

"You were made by God and for God. Until you know that, life won't make sense."

"You have to have hope to cope."

"Your greatest ministry always comes out of your deepest pain."

"While it would be easier to let go, Christ can give you the strength to hold on until the intensity goes down. Hope can begin to grow again with the choice to stay."

"People who experience suicidal thoughts are usually ambivalent; they don't really want to die - they just want the pain to stop."

"When you are feeling suicidal, remember the people and the purpose that keeps you tethered to life."

"If you are struggling with suicidal thoughts: don't isolate. Call for help. Reach out to those who love you - your family, a friend, your doctor, your church. Don't try to do this alone."

"Suicidal thoughts and feelings are like waves on an ocean. When they come in, they can be powerful and intense. But just like waves, your thoughts and feelings will recede. The intensity of that feeling right now may feel overwhelming; but hold on, that wave will recede again."

"The medical community will simply never be able to meet all the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of people with mental illness. But with the faith community as a partner, individuals can be given whole person support, increasing the likelihood of recovery and wellness."

"When faith communities open their hearts and their doors to people with mental illness and commit to walk with them on their path toward wellness, suffering is reduced and connections grow. People may see for the first time that they matter and there is a purpose for their life."

Verses

It's in Christ that we find out who we are and what we are living for. Long before we first heard of Christ and got our hopes up, he had his eye on us, had designs on us for glorious living, part of the overall purpose he is working out in everything and everyone.
Ephesians 1:11,12 (The Message)

"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full."
John 10:10 (NIV)

"Though the mountains be shaken and the hills be removed, yet my unfailing love for you will not be shaken nor my covenant of peace be removed," says the Lord, who has compassion on you. Isaiah 54:10 (NIV)

God remembered us when we were down, His love never quits. Psalm 136:23 (The Message)

"I will be your God throughout your lifetime - until your hair is white with age. I made you, and I will care for you. I will carry you along and save you." Isaiah 46:4 (NLT)

There is nothing in all creation that will ever be able to separate us from the love of God which is ours through Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 8:39 (GNT)

"I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand." John 10:28 (NIV)

But those who trust in the Lord will find new strength. They will soar high on wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not faint.
Isaiah 40:31 (NLT)

Be strong. Take courage. Don't be intimidated... your God, is striding ahead of you. He's right there with you. He won't let you down; he won't leave you.
Deuteronomy 31:6 (The Message)