

Preventing Suicide

Suicide can be prevented. In 2015, 44,193 Americans took their own lives and more than half a million Americans received medical care for self-inflicted injuries. September 10th is World Suicide Prevention Day, and the entire month is dedicated to suicide prevention awareness in the United States. Help prevent suicide in your community by knowing the facts, warning signs, and where to get help.

Suicide is a serious public health problem that affects people of all ages. It is the 10th leading cause of death for Americans and has been among the top 12 leading causes of death since 1975 in the United States.

Deaths from suicide are only part of the problem. Many more people survive suicide attempts than actually die. In 2015, more than half a million people (505,507) received medical care for self-inflicted injuries at emergency departments across the United States. Almost 1.4 million adults self-reported a suicide attempt and 9.7 million adults self-reported serious thoughts of suicide.



Suicide is usually the result of multiple risk factors. Having these risk factors, however, does not mean that suicide will occur.

Researchers identified some of these risk factors:

- History of previous suicide attempts
- Family history of suicide
- History of depression or other mental illness
- History of alcohol or drug abuse
- Stressful life event or loss (e.g., job, financial, relationship)
- Easy access to lethal methods
- History of interpersonal violence
- Stigma associated with mental illness and help-seeking

Protective factors buffer individuals from suicidal thoughts and behavior. Researchers identified some of the protective factors listed below:

- Skills in problem solving, conflict resolution, and nonviolent ways of handling disputes
- Effective clinical care for mental, physical, and substance abuse disorders
- Easy access to various clinical interventions and support
- Family and community support (connectedness)
- Cultural or religious beliefs that discourage suicide and support seeking help

Many people are uncomfortable with the topic of suicide. As a result, people rarely communicate openly about suicide. Thus, an important public health problem is left hidden in secrecy, which can hinder effective prevention efforts.

Know the Warning Signs and Get Help

There are warning signs for suicide, such as feeling hopeless, threatening to hurt oneself or talking about wanting to die, increasing alcohol and drug use, and withdrawing from friends and family. Research has uncovered a wealth of information about the causes of suicide and prevention strategies. For more information, visit the [American Association of Suicidology](http://www.suicidology.org/resources/warning-signs). (<http://www.suicidology.org/resources/warning-signs>)

Additionally, CDC has released a technical package, [Preventing Suicide: A Technical Package of Policy, Programs, and Practices](#) [6.09 MB]. A technical package is a collection of strategies that represents the best available evidence to prevent or reduce public health problems such as suicide.

If you or someone you know is having thoughts of suicide, contact the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at **1-800-273-TALK (1-800-273-8255)** or visit [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. \(http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/\)](http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/).

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