



Suicide Prevention Kit 2024

Suicide Prevention

Suicide is a leading cause of death in the United States and a major public health concern. When a person dies by suicide, the effects are felt by family, friends, and communities. This brochure can help you, a friend, or a family member learn more about the warning signs of suicide, ways to help prevent suicide, and effective treatment options.

IF YOU OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW IS IN CRISIS:

Call or text the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline at 988 or chat at 988lifeline.org. The Lifeline provides free and confidential support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, across the United States.

Call 911 in life-threatening situations.



What are the Warning Signs of Suicide?

Warning signs that someone may be at immediate risk for attempting suicide include:

- Talking about wanting to die or wanting to kill themselves
- Talking about feeling empty or hopeless or having no reason to live
- Talking about feeling trapped or feeling that there are no solutions
- Feeling unbearable emotional or physical pain
- Withdrawing from family and friends
- Giving away important possessions
- Saying goodbye to friends and family
- Putting affairs in order, such as making a will
- Taking great risks that could lead to death, such as driving extremely fast
- Talking or thinking about death often

Other serious warning signs that someone may be at risk for attempting suicide include:

- Displaying extreme mood swings, suddenly changing from very sad to very calm or happy
- Making a plan or looking for ways to kill themselves, such as searching for lethal methods online, stockpiling pills, or buying a gun
- Talking about feeling great guilt or shame
- Using alcohol or drugs more often
- Acting anxious or agitated
- Changing eating or sleeping habits



Who is at Risk for Suicide?

People of all genders, ages, and ethnicities can be at risk for suicide.

The main risk factors for suicide are:

- A history of suicide attempts
- Depression, other mental disorders, or substance use disorder
- Chronic pain
- Family history of a mental disorder or substance use
- Exposure to family violence, including physical or sexual abuse
- Presence of guns or other firearms in the home
- Having recently been released from prison or jail
- Exposure, either directly or indirectly, to others' suicidal behavior, such as that of family members, peers, or celebrities

Most people who have risk factors for suicide will not attempt suicide, and it is difficult to tell who will act on suicidal thoughts.



What Treatment and Therapies are Available?

Effective, evidence-based interventions are available to help:

- **Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT):** CBT is a type of psychotherapy that can help people learn new ways of dealing with stressful experiences. CBT helps people learn to recognize their thought patterns and consider alternative actions when thoughts of suicide arise.
- **Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT):** DBT is a type of psychotherapy that has been shown to reduce suicidal behavior in adolescents. DBT also has been shown to reduce the rate of suicide attempts in adults with borderline personality disorder, a mental illness characterized by an ongoing pattern of varying moods, self-image, and behavior that often results in impulsive actions and problems in relationships. A therapist trained in DBT can help a person recognize when their feelings or actions are disruptive or unhealthy and teach the person skills that can help them cope more effectively with upsetting situations.
- **Brief Intervention Strategies:** Research has shown that creating a safety plan or crisis response plan—with specific instructions for what to do and how to get help when having thoughts about suicide—can help reduce a person's risk of acting on suicidal thoughts. Staying connected and following up with people who are at risk for suicide also has been shown to help lower the risk of future suicide attempts. Research also has shown that increasing safe storage of lethal means can help reduce suicide attempts and deaths by suicide. In addition, collaborative assessment and management of suicide risk can help to reduce suicidal thoughts.
- **Collaborative Care:** Collaborative care is a team-based approach to mental health care. A behavioral health care manager will work with the person, their primary health care provider, and mental health specialists to develop a treatment plan. Collaborative care has been shown to be an effective way to treat depression and reduce suicidal thoughts.

What Should I Do if I am Struggling or Someone I Know is Having Thoughts of Suicide?

- If you notice warning signs of suicide—especially a change in behavior or new, concerning behavior—get help as soon as possible.
- Family and friends are often the first to recognize the warning signs of suicide, and they can take the first step toward helping a loved one find mental health treatment.
- If someone tells you that they are going to kill themselves, do not leave them alone. Do not promise that you will keep their suicidal thoughts a secret—tell a trusted friend, family member, or other trusted adult.
- Call 911 if there is an immediate life-threatening situation.
- Call or text 988 to connect with a trained crisis counselor.
- You can always call your EAP, 24/7 to speak confidentially with a caring, professional consultant for support, information or referrals.

5 Action Steps for Helping Someone in Emotional Pain

1. ASK: "Are you thinking about killing yourself?"
2. KEEP THEM SAFE: Reducing a suicidal person's access to highly lethal items or places is an important part of suicide prevention. While this is not always easy, asking if the at-risk person has a plan and removing or disabling the lethal means can make a difference.
3. BE THERE: Listen carefully and learn what the individual is thinking and feeling.
4. HELP THEM CONNECT: Save the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline number (call or text 988) in your phone so they're there if you need them. You can also help make a connection with a trusted individual like a family member, friend, spiritual advisor, or mental health professional.
5. STAY CONNECTED: Staying in touch after a crisis or after being discharged from care can make a difference.

Thank you.