

# What Leads to Suicide?

There is no single cause. Suicide most often occurs when stressors and health issues converge to create an experience of hopelessness and despair. Depression is the most common condition associated with suicide, and is often undiagnosed or untreated. Most people who actively manage their mental health conditions lead fulfilling lives. Conditions like depression, anxiety, and substance use problems, especially when unaddressed, increase risk for suicide.

## Some People are More at Risk for Suicide than Others



### HEALTH FACTORS

#### Mental health conditions

- Depression
- Substance use disorders
- Bipolar disorder
- Schizophrenia and psychosis
- Personality traits of aggression, mood changes, and poor relationships
- Conduct disorder
- Anxiety disorder

#### Serious or chronic health condition and/or pain

#### Traumatic brain injury



### ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

#### Access to lethal means

Including firearms and drugs

**Prolonged stress**, such as harassment, bullying, relationship problems, and unemployment

**Stressful life events**, which may include a death, divorce, or job loss

**Exposure to another person's suicide**, or to graphic or sensationalized accounts of suicide



### HISTORICAL FACTORS

#### Previous suicide attempts

#### Family history of suicide

#### Abused as a child

Risk factors are characteristics or conditions that increase the chance that a person may try to take their life.

## Suicide Warning Signs



### TALK

#### If a person talks about:

- Killing themselves
- Feeling hopeless
- Having no reason to live
- Being a burden to others
- Feeling trapped
- Unbearable pain



### BEHAVIOR

#### Behaviors that may signal risk, especially if related to a painful event, loss, or change:

- Increased use of alcohol or drugs
- Looking for a way to end their lives, such as searching online for materials or means
- Withdrawing from activities
- Isolating from family and friends
- Sleeping too little or too much
- Visiting or calling people to say goodbye
- Giving away prized possessions
- Aggression
- Fatigue



### MOOD

#### People who are considering suicide often display one or more of the following moods:

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Loss of interest
- Irritability
- Humiliation
- Agitation
- Rage

Most people who take their lives exhibit one or more warning signs, through what they say or what they do.

## Suicide Prevention Lifeline

1-800-273-TALK (8255)



# Be a lifesaver.

Learn how you can fight suicide at [afsp.org](http://afsp.org)



## Assume You Are The Only One Who Will Reach Out IF YOU'RE CONCERNED ABOUT SOMEONE, TALK IN PRIVATE

Listen to their story, and let them know you care. **Ask directly about suicide**, calmly and without judgment. Show understanding and take their concerns seriously. Let them know their life matters to you. That one conversation could save a life.

**AVOID** Debating the value of life.

**AVOID** Advice to fix it.

**AVOID** Minimizing the person's feelings.

---

## IF A PERSON SAYS THEY ARE THINKING ABOUT SUICIDE

Take the person seriously: someone considering suicide is experiencing a life-threatening health crisis and may not believe they can be helped. Work with them to keep them safely away from lethal means like firearms and drugs and remind them that their suffering is temporary. Stay with them and call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273 TALK (8255). Be sure to follow up with them after the crisis to see how they are doing.

---

## IF YOU'RE STRUGGLING

Don't wait for someone to reach out. Seek mental health treatment, or tell your clinician about your suicidal thinking. Treat yourself like you would treat someone else who needs your help.



**INVENTIVE COUNSELING**

[www.InventiveCounseling.com](http://www.InventiveCounseling.com)

## RESOURCES

### ❖ VISIT

Your Primary Care Provider

Psychiatric Hospital

Walk-in Clinic

Emergency Department

Urgent Care Center

### ❖ FIND A MENTAL HEALTH PROVIDER

### ❖ SUICIDE PREVENTION LIFELINE

1-800-273- TALK (8255)

Veterans: PRESS 1

### ❖ CRISIS TEXT LINE

Text HELLO to 741-741

### ❖ CrisisChat.org

### ❖ CALL 911 FOR EMERGENCIES

HELP is available