

Suicide Prevention

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Suicide is a leading cause of death. Suicide is death caused by injuring oneself with the intent to die. A suicide attempt is when someone harms themselves with the intent to end their life, but they do not die as a result of their actions. Many factors can increase the risk for suicide or protect against it. Suicide is connected to other forms of injury and violence. For example, people who have experienced violence, including child abuse, bullying, or sexual violence have a higher suicide risk. Being connected to family and community support and having easy access to healthcare can decrease suicidal thoughts and behaviors. Suicide is a serious public health problem. Suicide rates increased approximately 36% between 2000–2022. Suicide was responsible for over 49,000 deaths in 2022, which is about one death every 11 minutes. The number of people who think about or attempt suicide is even higher. In 2022, an estimated 13.2 million American adults seriously thought about suicide, 3.8 million planned a suicide attempt, and 1.6 million attempted suicide. Suicide affects people of all ages. In 2022, suicide was among the top 9 leading causes of death among age groups 10-64. Suicide was the second leading cause of death for ages 10-14 and 25-34. Some groups have higher suicide rates than others. Suicide rates vary by race/ ethnicity, age, and other factors, such as where someone lives. By race/ethnicity, the groups with the highest rates are non-Hispanic American Indian/Alaska Native people followed by non-Hispanic White people. Other Americans with higher-than-average rates of suicide are veterans, people who live in rural areas, and workers in certain industries and occupations like mining and construction. Young people who identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual have higher prevalence of suicidal thoughts and behavior compared to their peers who identify as heterosexual.

Suicide has far-reaching impacts. Suicide can be prevented. Suicide and suicide attempts cause serious emotional, physical, and economic impacts. People who attempt suicide

and survive may experience serious injuries that can have long-term effects on their health. They may also experience depression and other mental health concerns. Suicide and suicide attempts affect the health and well-being of friends, loved ones, co-workers, and the community. When people die by suicide, their surviving family and friends may experience prolonged grief, shock, anger, guilt, symptoms of depression or anxiety, and even thoughts of suicide themselves. The financial toll of suicide on society is also costly. In 2020, suicide and nonfatal self-harm cost the nation over \$500 billion in medical costs, work loss costs, value of statistical life, and quality of life costs.

Suicide can be prevented.

Suicide is preventable and everyone has a role to play to save lives and create healthy and strong individuals, families, and communities. Suicide prevention requires a comprehensive public health approach. CDC developed the Suicide Prevention Resource for Action, which provides information on the best available evidence for suicide prevention. States and communities can use the Prevention Resource to help make decisions about suicide prevention activities. Strategies range from those designed to support people at increased risk to a focus on the whole population, regardless of risk.

Strategies to Prevent Suicide

Strengthen economic supports

- Improve household financial security • Stabilize housing

Create protective environments

- Reduce access to lethal means among persons at risk of suicide • Create healthy organizational policies and culture • Reduce substance use through community-based policies and practices

Improve access and delivery of suicide care

- Cover mental health conditions in health insurance policies
- Increase provider availability in underserved areas
- Provide rapid and remote access to help
- Create safer suicide care through systems change

Promote healthy connections

- Promote healthy peer norms
- Engage community members in shared activities

Teach coping and problemsolving skills

- Support social-emotional learning programs
- Teach parenting skills to improve family relationships
- Support resilience through education programs

Identify and support people at risk

- Train gatekeepers • Respond to crises • Plan for safety and follow-up after an attempt • Provide therapeutic approaches

Lessen harms and prevent future risk

- Intervene after a suicide (postvention)
- Report and message about suicide safely