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## Must-Know Words

**Protective Factors** are individual, relational, community, and societal situations or problems that can reduce the possibility of and prevent a person from attempting suicide.

**Risk Factors** are individual, relational, community, and societal situations or problems that can increase the possibility that a person will attempt suicide.



## Mental Health Awareness Dates

### This Month: September 2023 Month

- [Children’s Good Manners Month](#)
- [Self-Improvement Month](#)
- [Sexual Health Awareness Month](#)
- [Suicide Prevention Awareness Month](#)

### Week

- 10-16 [National Suicide Prevention Week](#)
- 17-23 [Student Sleep Health Week](#)

### Day

- 10 [World Suicide Prevention Day](#)
- 21 [International Day of Peace](#)

# HOPE STARTS HERE



Note: This newsletter includes links to external resources.

## September is

## Suicide Prevention Awareness Month

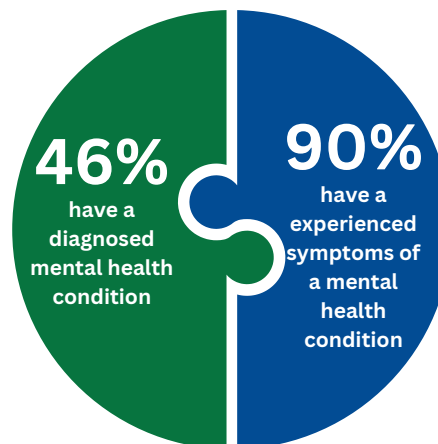
Yes, it’s a tough subject, but it is an extremely important one to discuss. Thoughts of suicide are scary, but by knowing the facts, signs and symptoms, and available supports, and checking on others, it can save lives.

**Here are some quick facts:**

### Suicide is a leading cause of death in the United States:



### Among those who die by suicide:



#### Individual Impact

- **79% of all people who die by suicide are male.**
- Although **more women than men attempt suicide, men are 4x more likely to die by suicide.**

#### Community Impact

- Annual prevalence of **serious thoughts of suicide, high risk populations:**
  - U.S. Adults: 4.8%
  - Native Hawaiian/other Pacific Islander: 7.4%
  - Mixed/Multiracial: 8.2%
  - American Indian/Alaska Native: 8.5%
  - **Young adults aged 18-25: 13%**
  - **High school students: 22%**
  - **LGBTQ+ youth: 41%**
- **Highest rates of suicide in the U.S.:** American Indian/Alaskan Natives, followed by non-Hispanic whites.
- **LGBTQ+ youth are 4x more likely to attempt suicide than straight youth.**



## Youth Mental Health

**Mental health conditions are very common.** Research shows that:

- **1 in 6 youth/adolescents will experience a mental health condition** in any given time.
- **50% of all lifetime mental health conditions begin before the age of 14; 75% start before age 24.**
- **Suicidal thoughts are common** among teens and are a symptom of mental health conditions **and they can be treated and improve over time.**

It is normal to have a wide range of emotions and for emotions to change, especially after a period of adjustment, loss, a major life event, etc. When a person has feelings that are prolonged, outside the normal range, and/or that are affecting their daily functioning, it's important to take notice. **Identifying warning signs or symptoms and seeking treatment early can make a difference in reducing the impact of a mental health condition. Below are some areas to take notice of:**

### Anxiety

If the amount of anxiety or stress is disproportionate to the task or reality of risk:

- Worrying about almost everything and it's impacting functioning
- Fearful of certain, generally safe, places or people
- Sudden bursts of fear or feeling of doom
- Physical symptoms of anxiety (not associated with a medical cause) such as rapid heart rate, dizziness, nausea, difficulty breathing
- Having repetitive thoughts or behaviors, believing that it may prevent something bad from happening

### Depression

Having more down days than okay/good days and:

- Mood changes
- Impaired sleep (trouble falling asleep, staying asleep, not sleeping enough, or sleeping too much)
- Lower energy or sluggishness
- Decreased self-esteem
- Difficulty concentrating
- Changes in appetite (excessive or reduced appetite)
- Increased irritability or agitation
- Thoughts or behaviors related to hurting oneself or thoughts of suicide

### Disruptions in Social Interactions or Relationships

- Challenges with interacting with others including peers, family, teachers, or others
- Difficulties participating in routine social activities, such as play or group activities
- Isolation or withdrawal from family and friends when they were previously more social

### Changes in School or Extracurricular Performance

- Gradual or sudden decline in academic or extracurricular performance or participation

### Acute or Prolonged Stress

- Decline in memory or, conversely, having flashbacks
- Recurrent thoughts or re-experiencing of something traumatic that happened
- Emotional numbing, such as "checking out" from their feelings or interactions with others
- Hyperarousal, such as experiencing a state of panic (see also: anxiety)

### Substance Use/Misuse

Some of the above symptoms might also relate to:

- Misuse of over-the-counter medications or prescription medications
- Use of alcohol, marijuana, psychedelic drugs, and more



**Anyone who is having serious or continuing thoughts of suicide, having impulses to self-harm or making plans for suicide *needs to be* connected to care and support services.**

**Common Risk Factors that Increase the Risk of Suicide:**

- Prior suicide attempts
- Family history of suicide
- History of mental health conditions such as severe depression, anxiety disorders and psychotic disorders
- Substance misuse
- Impulsivity or aggressiveness
- Serious family problems
- Breakups or other major relationship losses
- Access to means for self-harm (unsecured firearms, prescription medications, poisons)
- Social isolation
- History of traumatic experiences such as sexual violence or severe episodes of racial prejudice/violence, bullying
- Lack of access to mental health care
- Multiple exposures to suicide in one's community or through unsafe coverage of suicide in the media

**Signs that might indicate that the person's thoughts of suicide are escalating or that there is more acute risk:**

- Talking, joking or posting online about dying or life not being worth living
- Feelings of hopelessness, shame or of being a burden to others
- Extreme sadness, anger or irritability
- Extreme feelings of emotional pain
- Planning or researching ways to die
- Withdrawal from others, saying or posting "goodbye" messages, giving away possessions
- Erratic or disorganized behavior
- Changes in substance use
- Seeking means to self-harm

**Common Protective Factors that Reduce/Prevent Suicide Risk**

- Effective coping and problem-solving skills
- Strong social and family connections
- Access to quality mental health care
- Support from religious or social communities
- Lack of access to means to self-harm



# ACTION PLAN

## 9 Things Parents Can Do to Help Prevent Suicide

- 1. Notice and Talk About It.** Notice changes in your child and start an open conversation, such as, *"You know I love you and I care about you very much. I'm concerned because I've noticed that you seem [emotion]. I'm hoping we can talk about it so I can help you. What's going on?"*
- 2. Listen.** It's not uncommon for kids and teens to turn down a conversation about feelings, suicide, etc. Whether they have the conversation or not, still "listen" to what they're not saying. Behaviors, body language, changes in hygiene, sleeping, social life, academics, and more can be very telling of what they're experiencing.
- 3. Don't assume.** A common statement after someone dies by suicide is, "I never thought it could happen to them." Suicide risk factors are many, and many times we don't take the time to familiarize ourselves with them. Learn the warning signs and pay attention to major life events and changes in your child.
- 4. Don't dismiss the signs.** Yes, there can be kid or teenage "drama," and sometimes it is much worse or more impactful to the child than we realize. Many kids who attempt suicide will tell their parents/guardians ahead of time (though others do not). Words such as these indicate an urgent need for help:
  - *"The world would be better off without me."*
  - *"I don't deserve to live."*
  - *"I wish I could go to sleep and never wake up."*
  - *"You won't have to worry about me much longer."*
  - *"I want to die/kill myself."*
- 5. Respond with empathy and understanding.** Even if you don't understand, be gentle:
  - *"It sounds like you're hurting a lot to be considering ending your life. I love you a lot and I want you to live a full, happy life. Let's get you help so you can start feeling better. I'll be with you every step of the way."*
- 6. Get professional help right away.** Reach out to hotlines or professionals for help.
- 7. Remove or secure guns, weapons, or anything that could be used as a weapon (e.g., knives, ropes). Lock up and personally administer medications. Remove or lock up other means to harm oneself, such as inhalants, chemicals, car keys.**
- 8. Create hope and practice patience.** Things can get better and it's an important to remind them of that. Sometimes things can feel worse before they get better; that's normal.
- 9. Encourage holistic wellbeing.** Encourage socializing/social support, exercise, healthy eating, getting enough sleep, balance/moderation of work, and self-care.

Additional resources: [Preventing Youth Suicide: Suicide Prevention Resources for Parents, Educators & Professionals](#)



## Emergency Mental Health Resources

Galileo's mental health services are offered to students during the school day when school is in session. After-hours support is not available through GSDL counselors. **The following resources are available 24/7. In the event of a life-threatening emergency, call 911 or go to your nearest emergency room.**

<p><b>NATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION LIFELINE</b></p> <p>The Lifeline provides 24/7, free and confidential support for people in distress, prevention and crisis resources for you or your loved ones, and best practices for professionals.</p> <p><b>Call 988 or 1-800-273-8255.</b></p>	<p><b>DEVEREUX'S MOBILE CRISIS RESPONSE TEAM</b></p> <p>Devereux's Mobile Crisis Clinicians are available to respond within 60 minutes to de-escalate mental health and behavioral crises <b>24/7/365 by calling 211 and requesting Mobile Crisis Services.</b></p>
<p><b>CRISIS TEXT/CHAT LINE</b></p> <p>Text <b>HOME to 741741</b> (cell and data rates may apply), chat online at <a href="http://www.crisistextline.org">www.crisistextline.org</a>, or <u>message on WhatsApp</u>.</p>	<p><b>FLORIDA CHILD ABUSE HOTLINE</b></p> <p>To report a case of child abuse, neglect or abandonment, call the Florida Child Abuse Hotline at <b>1-800-96-ABUSE (1-800-962-2873).</b></p>

For additional resources to support youth with emotional health needs, as well as a local resource directory, visit: [namigo.org/resources/local-resources](http://namigo.org/resources/local-resources) or [www.seminolechildren.org](http://www.seminolechildren.org)



### Tell Us What You Think!

Your feedback matters! Help us help you by submitting the Mental Health Matters Newsletter Feedback form.