

# SUICIDE



Suicide is a serious public health problem that causes immeasurable pain, suffering, and loss to individuals, families, and communities nationwide. The causes of suicide are complex and determined by multiple combinations of factors, such as mental illness, substance abuse, painful losses, exposure to violence, and social isolation.

Nearly 41,000 people in the United States die from suicide annually, or 1 person every 13 minutes. This exceeds the rate of death from homicide and AIDS combined. More people die by suicide than from automobile accidents.

The suicide rate has been rising over the past decade, with much of the increase driven by suicides in mid-life, where the majority of all suicides in the United States now occur. From 1999 to 2013, the age-adjusted suicide rate for all ages in the United States increased (10.5% to 13.5%). Half of these deaths occur by use of a firearm.

Of all the death attributed to suicide in 2013, 78% of those are male. In 2013, the latest year for which data is available, the highest number of suicides among both men and women occurred among those aged 45 to 54. The highest rates of suicides (suicides per 100,000) occurred among men aged 75 and up and among women aged 45 to 54. Suicide was the second leading cause of death for young people ages 15 to 24 and for those aged 25 to 34.

Suicidal thoughts are also a significant concern. Having serious thoughts of suicide increases the risk of a person making an actual suicide attempt. There are more than 25 attempted suicides for each suicide death. In 2014, an estimated 9.4 million adults (3.9%) aged 18 or older had serious thoughts of suicide in the past year. Among high school students, more than 17% (approximately 2.5 million ninth through twelfth graders) have seriously considered suicide, more than 13% have made a suicide plan, and more than 8% have attempted suicide.

Alcohol and drug abuse are second only to depression and other mood disorders as the most frequent risk factors for suicide. In 2008, alcohol was a factor in approximately one-third of suicides reported in 16 states. In 2011, there was a 51% increase in drug-related suicide attempt visits to hospital emergency departments among people aged 12 and older. Suicide touches all ages and backgrounds, all racial and ethnic groups, in all parts of the country. However, some populations are at higher risk for suicidal behavior. For example, the emotional toll of a person's suicide can put surviving family, friends, and other loved ones at greater risk of dying by suicide.

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Fortunately, there is strong evidence that mental health treatment can be effective in reducing the risk of suicide. However, before treatment can be effective, the warning signs of suicide must be recognized.

Source: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration