

What leads to suicide?

There's 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 it 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.

RESOURCES



Visit

Your Primary Care Provider
Psychiatric Hospital
Walk-in Clinic
Emergency Department
Urgent Care Center



Find a mental health provider

findtreatments.samhsa.gov
mentalhealthamerica.net/finding-help



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

Be a lifesaver.

Learn how you can fight suicide at afsp.org.



TALK SAVES LIVES



AMERICAN FOUNDATION FOR
Suicide Prevention

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 disorders

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, either through what they say or what they do.

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 judgement. 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're 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.