



Suicide Prevention and Awareness

Over 44,000 Americans die by suicide every year. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, over half of those suicides seemed to come from "out of nowhere," where people did not have a previous history of mental health concerns but were struggling with circumstances in their lives.

However, chronic depression and bipolar disorder are often factors. Many people live with mental illness and should not be ashamed. Acknowledging depression and other mental challenges is often the first step in letting go of the stigma and not feeling alone.

It is likely we all know someone who may be thinking of ending their life. You too may be struggling with the issue. While most feel ill-equipped to deal with this difficult challenge, it is important to educate ourselves so that we're ready to help when the opportunity arrives.

We can do this by learning the warning signs of suicide, knowing what to do if we think someone is considering suicide and never discounting our power to make a difference.

Suicide Is Preventable

Look for warning signs such as:

- Talking about wanting to die or to kill oneself
- Talking about feeling hopeless or having no purpose
- Talking about feeling trapped or being in unbearable pain
- Talking about being a burden to others
- Increasing the use of alcohol or drugs
- Acting anxious, agitated, or reckless
- Sleeping too little or too much
- Withdrawing or feeling isolated
- Showing rage or talking about seeking revenge
- Displaying extreme mood swings

If you suspect someone may have suicidal thoughts or planned actions, talk to them. Don't be afraid to ask them directly if they have thoughts or plans of harming themselves.

Always take mentions of suicidal thoughts seriously and ask follow-up questions. If the answers don't leave you feeling confident that the person is safe, involve a mental health professional as soon as possible.

Remember that most people don't want to die – they are seeking relief for the pain they feel. A simple human connection can be a lifeline to the help and hope they need to live another day.

Help Is Available

- **Call 911** if you are in danger of acting on suicidal thoughts
- Call, text or chat the **988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline** at 988 if you or someone else is in distress, feel like there may be a risk of suicide, or having a crisis related to mental health, substance use, or a developmental disability (www.988lifeline.org).
- Text the **Crisis Text Line** at **741741**
- Chat live with **IMALIVE** online at www.imalive.org
- **Your EAP is available** if you or someone you know has been impacted by suicide. Visit your website for more information and resources.

This information is not intended to replace professional care. Please call your EAP if professional care is needed. The EAP offers assessment, counseling and referral to appropriate resources.