



Forest Charter School

A Personalized Learning Public Charter School
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530-265-4823

Suicide Prevention Information

The Information below comes from the [National Institute of Mental Health](https://www.nimh.nih.gov/). Please go to their website for more information.

If You Know Someone in Crisis

Call the toll-free National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (NSPL) at **1-800-273-TALK (8255)**, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The service is available to everyone. The deaf and hard of hearing can contact the Lifeline via TTY at 1-800-799-4889. All calls are confidential. Contact social media outlets directly if you are concerned about a friend's social media updates or dial 911 in an emergency. Learn more on the NSPL's [website](https://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/).

Introduction

Suicide is a major public health concern. Over 40,000 people die by suicide each year in the United States; it is the [10th leading cause of death](https://www.cdc.gov/suicide/) overall. Suicide is complicated and tragic but it is often preventable. Knowing the warning signs for suicide and how to get help can help save lives.



Signs and Symptoms

The behaviors listed below may be signs that someone is thinking about suicide.

- Talking about wanting to die or wanting to kill themselves
- Talking about feeling empty, hopeless, or having no reason to live
- Making a plan or looking for a way to kill themselves, such as searching online, stockpiling pills, or buying a gun
- Talking about great guilt or shame
- Talking about feeling trapped or feeling that there are no solutions
- Feeling unbearable pain (emotional pain or physical pain)
- Talking about being a burden to others
- Using alcohol or drugs more often
- Acting anxious or agitated
- Withdrawing from family and friends
- Changing eating and/or sleeping habits
- Showing rage or talking about seeking revenge
- Taking great risks that could lead to death, such as driving extremely fast
- Talking or thinking about death often
- Displaying extreme mood swings, suddenly changing from very sad to very calm or happy

- Giving away important possessions
- Saying goodbye to friends and family
- Putting affairs in order, making a will

If these warning signs apply to you or someone you know, get help as soon as possible, particularly if the behavior is new or has increased recently. One resource is the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, **1-800-273-TALK (8255)**. The Lifeline is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The deaf and hard of hearing can contact the Lifeline via TTY at 1-800-799-4889.

Risk Factors

Suicide does not discriminate. People of all genders, ages, and ethnicities can be at risk. Suicidal behavior is complex and there is no single cause. In fact, many different factors contribute to someone making a suicide attempt. But people most at risk tend to share certain characteristics. The main risk factors for suicide are:

- Depression, other mental disorders, or substance abuse disorder
- Certain medical conditions
- Chronic pain
- A prior suicide attempt
- Family history of a mental disorder or substance abuse
- Family history of suicide
- Family violence, including physical or sexual abuse
- Having guns or other firearms in the home
- Having recently been released from prison or jail
- Being exposed to others' suicidal behavior, such as that of family members, peers, or celebrities

Many people have some of these risk factors but do not attempt suicide. It is important to note that suicide is not a normal response to stress. **Suicidal thoughts or actions are a sign of extreme distress, not a harmless bid for attention, and should not be ignored.**

Often, family and friends are the first to recognize the warning signs of suicide and can be the first step toward helping an at-risk individual find treatment with someone who specializes in diagnosing and treating mental health conditions. See the resources on our [“Find Help for Mental Illnesses”](#) page if you're not sure where to start.

Five Action Steps for Helping Someone in Emotional Pain

1. **Ask:** “Are you thinking about killing yourself?” It’s not an easy question but studies show that [asking at-risk individuals](#) if they are suicidal does not increase suicides or suicidal thoughts.
2. **Keep them safe:** Reducing a suicidal person’s access to highly lethal items or places is an important part of suicide prevention. While this is not always easy, asking if the at-risk person has a plan and [removing or disabling the lethal means](#) can make a difference.

3. **Be there:** Listen carefully and learn what the individual is thinking and feeling. Findings suggest [acknowledging and talking about suicide](#) may in fact [reduce rather than increase](#) suicidal thoughts.
4. **Help them connect:** Save the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline's number in your phone so it's there when you need it: 1-800-273-TALK (8255). You can also help make a connection with a trusted individual like a family member, friend, spiritual advisor, or mental health professional.
5. **Stay Connected:** Staying in touch after a crisis or after being discharged from care can make a difference. [Studies have shown](#) the number of suicide deaths goes down when someone follows up with the at-risk person.

More ideas

Instant access: It may be helpful to save several emergency numbers to your cell phone. The ability to get immediate help for yourself or for a friend can make a difference.

- The phone number for a trusted friend or relative
- The non-emergency number for the local police department
- The Crisis Text Line: 741741
- The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

Social Media: Knowing how to get help for a social media friend can save a life. Contact the social media site directly if you are concerned about a friend's updates or dial 911 in an emergency. Learn more on the NSPL's [website](#).