

Suicide: A Prevailing Concern

For many, the very thought of suicide is repellant and difficult to talk about. Yet suicide has been and remains a vital health concern, especially today. In 2024, suicide rates in the United States reached a level unseen since the early 1940s.

To understand the mindset of someone who decides to take their own life, the best we can do is speak with those who survived their suicide attempts. While every person is different and not all experiences amount to the same patterns and events, there are some prevailing consistencies when it comes to suicidality and suicidal ideation.

1. Initial thoughts of suicide may occur years before a suicide attempt. Initial thoughts may be fleeting and non-specific – for example, wishing that you could stop living, or that things would be better or easier if you were dead, but not necessarily having a plan, means, or intent to self-harm.
2. For some, the decision to take one's own life can be very impulsive, sometimes occurring within a matter of minutes. This suggests that preventative measures such as netting around bridges or glass partitions around the roofs of tall buildings are effective at preventing some suicides.
3. For others, the decision to take one's own life is more pre-meditated and can leave the individual feeling and acting better once a decision has been made, though an actual attempt may be weeks, months, or even years in the future.
4. Per the American Academy of Physicians, the best predictor of completed suicide is a history of suicide attempts.



Some not-so-obvious red flags

While suicides almost invariably catch many impacted survivors off-guard, the truth of the matter is there *are* often warning signs – we just aren't necessarily trained or in a position to recognize or become aware of them. Some of these not-so-obvious red flags include:

- Giving away personal possessions or family heirlooms
- Gallows humor (jokes about death, suicide, or life's miseries)
- Ending long-standing friendships or severing ties with family members for no apparent reason
- Profound longing for isolation or solitude
- Loss of interest in projects or hobbies that once fully engaged them
- Struggles with feelings of guilt and shame, often associated with the items above

What we can do

1. Dare to intrude. Intervene. Ask direct questions such as "Are you thinking about suicide?"
2. Stay with the person. Don't leave them alone. Be supportive and empathic. Remind them of all they have to live for.
3. Involve others. Don't go it alone. Confidentiality is excepted when there is an identified threat to an individual, including self-harm/suicide.
4. Share your own experience, strength, and hope. While you may not have ever struggled with suicidal thoughts, everyone has had difficult periods in life, and everyone has felt hopeless or powerless at one point or another. Remember that feeling, try and articulate what it felt like, and what helped you overcome it.
5. Utilize the resources listed below.

Suicide Prevention Resources

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 800-273-8255 or call/text 988

Website: <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>

Website Resources:

American Association of Suicidology

Email: info@suicidology.org

Website: <https://suicidology.org/>

SAVE - Suicide Awareness Voices of Education

Website: <https://save.org/>

Coping with Suicide Loss: <https://save.org/find-help/coping-with-loss/>

Child Mind Institute

Website: <https://childmind.org/>

Friends for Survival

Website: <https://friendsforsurvival.org/>

Suicide.org

Website: <http://suicide.org/>

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention

To locate a support group

Website: <https://afsp.org/find-a-support-group/>

Suicide Prevention Resource Center

Resources for Survivors of Suicide Loss

Website: <https://www.sprc.org>

**For more information, tools, resources, or app information,
call your Life Advisor Employee Assistance Program!**



**Ulliance provides no cost, confidential, short-term counseling
for you & your family.**

Call us- we're here to help **800.448.8326**