

## **Understanding Suicide**

Suicide is PREVENTABLE.

This means that there is always hope, no matter how dark it may seem.

Suicide victims come from all age groups and backgrounds. While there is no "typical" suicide victim, there are common warning signs. Being aware of these signs may prevent someone from getting to the point where he or she feels the need to act on thoughts of suicide.

### **Be on the lookout for these signs**

- Talks about suicide, death, and/or having no reason to live
- Is preoccupied with death and dying
- Withdraws from friends and/or social activities
- Suffers from a recent severe loss or the threat of a significant loss
- Experiences drastic changes in behavior
- Loses interest in hobbies, work or school
- Prepares for death by unexpectedly making out a will and final arrangements
- Gives away prized possessions
- Has attempted suicide before
- Takes unnecessary risks
- Loses interest in personal appearance
- Increases use of alcohol or drugs
- Expresses a sense of hopelessness
- Suffers from humiliation or failure
- Has a history of violence or hostility
- Is unwilling to connect with potential helpers
- Has trouble eating or sleeping

Currently, there are slightly more than 30,000 suicides annually, with 12 of every 100,000 Americans killing themselves. This annual suicide rate translates into one suicide every 17 minutes.

### **Other facts about suicide**

- Suicide rates in the U.S.A. can best be characterized as mostly stable over time with a slight tendency toward an increase.
- Rates of suicide are highest in the western regions, with the Mountain states having the next highest rates.
- Suicide is the eighth leading cause of death.
- Males complete suicide at a rate four times that of females.
- Firearms are currently the most often utilized method of suicide by essentially all groups (males, females, young, old, white, and non-white).

- Suicide rates have traditionally decreased in times of war and increased in times of economic crises.
- Suicide rates are the highest among the divorced, separated, and widowed and lowest among the married.
- Rates of suicide are highest among the elderly (age 65 and over).
- Elderly adults have rates of suicide of more than 50% higher than that of the nation as a whole.
- Youth (ages 15-24) suicide rates increased more than 200% from the 1950s to the late 1970s.
- Since the late 1970s, suicide rates for youth have remained stable or slightly decreased.
- Suicide ranks third as a cause of death among young (15-24) Americans behind accidents and homicide.
- White suicide rates are approximately twice those of non-whites.
- Native Americans (American Indians) are the racial/ethnic group with the highest overall suicide rate, but tribal group differences exist.
- Blacks and Hispanics, when ranked among worldwide statistics and reporting, exhibit lower risk of suicide.
- Psychological autopsy studies reflect that more than 90% of people completing suicides had one or more mental disorders.

The vast majority of individuals who are suicidal often display clues and warning signs. Care Crisis Response Services is here to help. For more general information about suicide prevention, please visit the [American Association of Suicidology](#) website. For information about youth suicide prevention and support in Washington State, please visit the [Youth Suicide Prevention Program](#) of Washington State's website.

If you or someone you know needs help dealing with thoughts of suicide NOW, or if you'd like more information about local resources, please call us at 1-800-584-3578 or at (425) 258-4357. We're available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.