

Suicide

Suicide is a complex behavior usually caused by a combination of factors. Research shows that almost all people who kill themselves have a diagnosable mental or substance abuse disorder or both, and that the majority have depressive illness. Studies indicate that the most promising way to prevent suicide and suicidal behavior is through the early recognition and treatment of depression and other psychiatric illnesses.

Suicide Risk Factors

It is important to note that many people experience one or more risk factors and are not suicidal.

- One or more diagnosable mental or substance abuse disorder
- Impulsivity
- Adverse life events
- Family history of mental or substance abuse disorder
- Family history of suicide
- Family violence, including physical or sexual abuse
- Prior suicide attempt
- Firearm in the home
- Incarceration
- Exposure to the suicidal behavior of others, including family, peers, or in the news or fiction stories

Warning Signs

There is no typical suicide victim. It happens to young and old, rich and poor. Fortunately, there are some common warning signs, when acted upon, can save lives. Here are some signs to look for:

- Talks about committing suicide
- Has trouble eating or sleeping
- Experiences drastic changes in behavior
- Withdraws from friends and/or social activities
- Loses interest in hobbies, work, school, etc.
- Prepares for death by making out a will and final arrangements
- Gives away prized possessions
- Has attempted suicide before
- Takes unnecessary risks
- Has had recent severe losses
- Is preoccupied with death and dying
- Loses interest in their personal appearance
- Increases their use of drugs or alcohol