

Suicide: A major, preventable mental U.S. Department of Health and Human Services—National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH)

Suicide: A major, preventable mental health problem

Facts about suicide and suicide prevention among teens and young adults.

Some common questions and answers about suicide:

Q: How common is suicide in children and teens?

A: In 2007, suicide was the third leading cause of death for young people ages 15-24. Suicide accounted for 4,140 deaths (12%) of the total 34,598 suicide deaths in 2007. **While these numbers may make suicide seem common, it is important to realize that suicide and suicidal behavior are not healthy or typical responses to stress.**

Q: What are some of the risk factors for suicide?

A: Risk factors vary with age, gender, or ethnic group. They may occur in combination or change over time. Some important risk factors are:

- Depression and other mental disorders, substance-abuse disorder (often in combination with other mental disorders)
- Prior suicide attempt
- Family history of suicide
- Family violence including physical or sexual abuse
- Firearms in the home
- Incarceration
- Exposure to suicidal behavior of others, such as family members or peers

However, it is important to note that many people who have these risk factors, are not suicidal.

Q: What are signs to look for?

A: The following are some of the signs you might notice in yourself or a friend that may be reason for concern.

- Feelings of hopelessness or worthlessness, depressed mood, poor self esteem or guilt
- Not wanting to participate in family or social activities
- Changes in sleeping and eating patterns: too much or too little
- Feelings of anger, rage, need for revenge
- Feeling exhausted most of the time
- Trouble with concentration, problems academically or socially in school
- Feeling listless, irritable
- Regular and frequent crying
- Not taking care of yourself
- Reckless, impulsive behaviors
- Frequent physical symptoms such as headaches or stomach aches

Seeking help is a sign of strength, if you are concerned, go with your instincts, get help!

Q: What can I do for myself or someone else?

A: If you are concerned, immediate action is very important. Suicide can be prevented and most people who feel suicidal demonstrate warning signs. Recognizing some of these warning signs is the first step in helping yourself or someone you care about.

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