



# Preventing Suicide

## Suicide is a leading cause of death.

Suicide is death caused by injuring oneself with the intent to die. A suicide attempt is when someone harms themselves with any intent to end their life, but they do not die as a result of their actions.

Many factors can increase the risk for suicide or protect against it. Suicide is connected to other forms of injury and violence. For example, people who have experienced violence, including child abuse, bullying, or sexual violence have a higher suicide risk. Being connected to family and community support and having easy access to health care can decrease suicidal thoughts and behaviors.

## Suicide is a serious public health problem.

Suicide rates increased 30% between 2000–2018, and declined in 2019 and 2020. Suicide is a leading cause of death in the United States, with 45,979 deaths in 2020. This is about one death every 11 minutes. The number of people who think about or attempt suicide is even higher. In 2020, an estimated 12.2 million American adults seriously thought about suicide, 3.2 million planned a suicide attempt, and 1.2 million attempted suicide.

**Suicide affects all ages.** In 2020, suicide was among the top 9 leading causes of death for people ages 10–64. Suicide was the 2<sup>nd</sup> leading cause of death for people ages 10–14 and 25–34.

**Some groups have higher suicide rates than others.** Suicide rates vary by race/ethnicity, age, and other factors, such as where someone lives. By race/ethnicity, the groups with the highest rates were non-Hispanic American Indian/Alaska Native and non-Hispanic White populations. Other Americans with higher than average rates of suicide are veterans, people who live in rural areas, and workers in certain industries and occupations like mining and construction. Young people who identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual have higher rates of suicidal thoughts and behavior compared to their peers who identify as heterosexual.



Nearly

**46,000**

people died by suicide in 2020



**1** death every  
**11** minutes

**Many adults think about suicide or attempt suicide**

**12.2 million**

Seriously thought about suicide

**3.2 million**

Made a plan for suicide

**1.2 million**

Attempted suicide

If you or someone you know is in crisis, please contact the **988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline**

- Call or text 988
- Chat at [988lifeline.org](https://988lifeline.org)

Connect with a trained crisis counselor. 988 is confidential, free, and available 24/7/365. Visit the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline for more information at [988lifeline.org](https://988lifeline.org).



## Suicide has far-reaching impacts.

Suicide and suicide attempts cause serious emotional, physical, and economic impacts. People who attempt suicide and survive may experience serious injuries that can have long-term effects on their health. They may also experience depression and other mental health concerns. The good news is that more than 90% of people who attempt suicide and survive never go on to die by suicide.

Suicide and suicide attempts affect the health and well-being of friends, loved ones, co-workers, and the community. When people die by suicide, their surviving family and friends may experience shock, anger, guilt, symptoms of depression or anxiety, and may even experience thoughts of suicide themselves.

The financial toll of suicide on society is also costly. In 2019, suicide and nonfatal self-harm cost the nation nearly \$490 billion in medical costs, work loss costs, value of statistical life, and quality of life costs.

## Suicide can be prevented.

Suicide is preventable and everyone has a role to play to save lives and create healthy and strong individuals, families, and communities. Suicide prevention requires a comprehensive public health approach.

CDC developed the [Suicide Prevention Resource for Action](#), which provides information on the best available evidence for suicide prevention. States and communities can use the technical package to help make decisions about suicide prevention activities. Strategies range from those designed to support people at increased risk to a focus on the whole population, regardless of risk.

### Strategies to Prevent Suicide



#### Strengthen economic supports

- Improve household financial security
- Stabilize housing



#### Create protective environments

- Reduce access to lethal means among persons at risk of suicide
- Create healthy organizational policies and culture
- Reduce substance use through community-based policies and practices



#### Improve access and delivery of suicide care

- Cover mental health conditions in health insurance policies
- Increase provider availability in underserved areas
- Provide rapid and remote access to help
- Create safer suicide care through systems change



#### Promote healthy connections

- Promote healthy peer norms
- Engage community members in shared activities



#### Teach coping and problem-solving skills

- Support social-emotional learning programs
- Teach parenting skills to improve family relationships
- Support resilience through education programs



#### Identify and support people at risk

- Train gatekeepers
- Respond to crises
- Plan for safety and follow-up after an attempt
- Provide therapeutic approaches



#### Lessen harms and prevent future risk

- Intervene after a suicide (postvention)
- Report and message about suicide safely