

Help with suicide awareness and prevention

Did you know suicide is a leading cause of death in the United States?¹



While most people feel uneasy with the topic of suicide, it may be because they don't know much about it. Here's information to help you learn more.

Risk factors

A complex mix of issues may put a person at risk. People who think about suicide often have very strong feelings of despair and isolation, which can cloud their judgment. Suicidal thinking is often linked to mental health conditions like depression or substance use disorder. Some risk factors include:¹

- Access to guns or pills
- Drug and alcohol use
- Prior suicide attempts
- Feeling angry or alone
- Feeling like a burden
- Tolerance for violence/pain
- Chronic illness
- Family history of suicide

Warning signs

People who attempt suicide often give warning signs. Here are some common signs to watch for:¹

- Talking about feeling hopeless or wanting to die
- Looking for a way to kill oneself — for instance searching online or buying a firearm
- Pulling away from family or friends
- Giving away prized possessions
- Putting affairs in order — such as updating a will
- Saying goodbye like it's the last time

Helping a suicidal person

When considering how to help a suicidal person, use the C.A.R.E. formula:

Consider the warning signs included in this article.

Ask to talk. Tell the person you care about them and want to help. Ask if they are feeling suicidal. If the person is suicidal, they shouldn't be left alone. Make sure they don't have access to firearms, drugs or other lethal means.

Refer to helpful resources, including calling or texting the National Suicide Prevention Line at **988**. If the person has a plan to end their life and is acting in an unsafe way, take them to the nearest emergency department or call **911**.

Even after the suicidal crisis has passed, remember to check in with them. Let them know they can come talk to you anytime.

Know that it's never too late to help someone who is thinking about suicide.

¹Risk factors, protective factors and warning signs. Available at: afsp.org. Accessed June 2025.

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