

UNDERSTANDING suicide

Causes, trends + how you can help.

KEY STATISTICS (US)*

Suicide is a leading cause of preventable death.

Someone dies by suicide every 11 minutes.

There is one suicide attempt every 26 seconds.

Suicide is the leading cause of death for Millennials.

The suicide rate for Black youth is rising faster than any other racial/ethnic group (+73% since 1991).

45% of LGBTQ+ youth seriously consider suicide each year.

Women attempt suicide at 3.5x the rate of men.

Men die by suicide at 4x the rate of women.

55% of suicides involve a firearm.

More people die from suicide than car accidents.

Almost twice as many people die from suicide than homicide.

1 in 59 Americans have lost a loved one to suicide.

A previous attempt is the strongest risk factor for suicide.

*Statistics are taken from the most recently available data from CDC WISQARS, Trevor Project + Drapeau, C. W., & McIntosh, J. L. (2023).

INCIDENCE

Suicide is a public health crisis on a global scale. It is the leading cause of violent death across the world. More than 700,000 fatalities worldwide each year (WHO, 2023).

In the US suicide rates hit an **all-time high** in 2022 rising to 49,449 deaths. This marks a 3% increase from 2021.

WHY DO PEOPLE DIE BY SUICIDE?

1

Suicide spans all demographics. It affects people of every age, race, gender identity, sexual orientation, culture, religion, + socioeconomic background, though certain groups may experience higher rates than others.

2

There is no single cause for suicide. It often results from a combination of factors such as high levels of prolonged distress, mental health issues, and trauma, all interacting with an individual's unique characteristics and life circumstances.

Suicides can also occur impulsively in moments of crisis often related to a major life changes, sudden loss or stressors such as financial or legal troubles.

3

Suicide is an ambivalent act. It is the end result of a process in which an individual's ability to cope breaks down, leading to intense struggle and crisis.

People who die from suicide often experience overwhelming loneliness, feel like they are a burden, and believe their circumstances will never change.

As a person's ability to cope diminishes, they find it increasingly hard to see alternative ways to alleviate their suffering. Importantly, suicide is not about dying, but a desperate search for relief from unbearable pain.

SUICIDE CAN BE PREVENTED



INDIVIDUAL



90% of people who survive a non-fatal suicide attempt **DO NOT** go on to die by suicide.

Self-harm and suicidal behaviors stem from a mix of personal factors (like mental health, coping styles, genetics), individual circumstances, and stressful events.

For the majority, feeling actively suicidal temporary. Targeted mental health support focused on preventing suicide can help a person manage these feelings, ease distress, and reduce risk.

Learning the warning signs and risk factors for suicide, increasing protective factors like social support, and reducing access to lethal means can help save lives.

SOCIETY

Structural forces like racism and other forms of social inequality not only heighten the risk of suicide but also hinder prevention efforts, particularly for individuals with intersecting marginalized identities.

Expanding access to community support and mental health services for marginalized groups, and measures to increase safety around access to lethal means is key to preventing suicide.

Stigma can also make it hard for people to seek help; outreach campaigns aimed at combatting stigma can encourage those in crisis to reach out for support.



Expand Culturally Informed Care



Enhance Protective Factors



Increase Lethal Means Safety



Combat Stigma