

Suicide

(Easy Reading Version)



1919 University Avenue West, Suite 400, St. Paul, MN 55104 Tel. 651-645-2948 or 888-NAMIHELPS www.namimn.org

If you or someone you know is in an emergency, call 911 right away or call The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255). You can also text the crisis text line by texting MN to 741-741.

Suicide is a major public health crisis. Each year more than 34,000 people die by suicide. Suicide is the 10th leading cause of death among adults in the U.S. It is the 3rd leading cause of death among teenagers.

What are the warning signs of suicide?

- Talking, writing, or thinking about death. Talking about killing themselves.
- Big change in personality: going from very outgoing to very shy. Becoming less social.
- No longer enjoying things they used to love: not playing basketball anymore. Not wanting to play outside.
- Using alcohol or drugs.
- Aggressive behavior like hitting, pushing, or yelling.
- Pulling away from friends, family, and community. Spending more time alone.
- Big mood swings. Going from very happy to very angry fast.
- Making dangerous choices. Acting without thinking.
- Having a hard time concentrating. Grades going down.
- Giving away their things. They may give away something they love or tell someone their passwords.
- Saying goodbye to friends and family.
- Mood shifting from very upset to calm quickly. They suddenly seem like they are at peace.
- Making a plan of how they will die.
- Feeling very alone or thinking that their family will be better off without them.

Who is at risk?

Anyone can be at risk of suicide. Common risk factors include:

- **Past suicide attempts**
- **Using drugs or alcohol**
- **Having a mental illness** like depression
- **Access to guns** (guns are used in most suicides)
- **Physical illness**
- **History of trauma**
- **Recent tragedy or loss, especially if it's by suicide**

How can suicide be prevented?

- **Know the warning signs:** If you are worried about someone, ask the person if they are thinking about suicide directly. If you can't ask, find someone who can. **Asking about suicide does not put the thought into their head.** It will not make them think about suicide if they aren't already. If they say yes, don't leave them alone. Connect them to a mental health professional.
- **Seek help with a mental health professional:** Mental health treatment can help the person cope with their feelings. Treatment might take time, but it does work! See the back of this page for more information about how to get help.
- **Make it hard for the person to get what they need to attempt suicide:** This means removing guns, other weapons, and medications from the home. If you can't remove them, put them in a lockbox with a key. Amazon has lockboxes: <https://amzn.to/2BQ5qaX>

See more at: <https://www.nami.org/Learn-More/Mental-Health-Conditions/Related-Conditions/Risk-of-Suicide>;
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How to Help Someone that is Feeling Suicidal

How do I ask someone if they are thinking about suicide?

- Ask the question directly:
 - “Are you thinking about suicide?”
 - “Are you thinking about killing yourself?”
- Do **NOT** ask in a way that says “I want you to say no.” **Avoid** saying:
 - “You’re not thinking about suicide, are you?”
 - “You wouldn’t do anything stupid, would you?”
- Asking a person about suicide will not plant the idea in their head
- If you can’t ask the question, find someone who can

What do I do if someone says they are suicidal?

- Call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-8255.
 - They can tell you what steps to take to help your friend
- If it is **NOT** an emergency, call your **County Crisis Team**
 - Every county has a crisis team. They can come to your house and talk to your friend. They can tell you if your friend needs to go to the hospital. They can help you find resources and services. You can look up your county crisis number at <https://mn.gov/dhs/people-we-serve/adults/health-care/mental-health/resources/crisis-contacts.jsp>
- If it is an emergency, **call 911**
 - Say, “This is a mental health emergency.”
 - Ask for a Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) officer, if possible. They have extra training for how to help people that are thinking about suicide.
 - They will send an officer that can take the person to the hospital.

What do I do if a friend gets hospitalized for being suicidal?

- Treat this like you would for any other hospitalization:
 - Send cards, flowers, or other things to cheer them up
 - Visit them
 - Make them meals
- Get other people involved. Ask your friend, “Who else might be able to help?” Some people that might help your friend are:
 - Their doctor, therapist, family members, friends, a community leader, a faith leader like a pastor or a priest

Useful phone numbers:

- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-8255 for English and 1-888-628-9454 for Spanish
- Crisis Textline: Text MN to 741741. You or a friend can text this number any time if you just need someone to talk to
- Call ****CRISIS** to reach the nearest Metro Area crisis team
- Call your county mental health crisis number. Find your county’s number at <https://mn.gov/dhs/people-we-serve/adults/health-care/mental-health/resources/crisis-contacts.jsp>

Websites:

- **Means Matter:** meansmatter.org
- **American Foundation for Suicide Prevention:** afsp.org
- **National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention:** actionallianceforsuicideprevention.org
- **SAVE:** save.org
- **Suicide Prevention Resource Center:** sprc.org
- **The Trevor Project:** thetrevorproject.org