

# ALERT!



*Suicide is never the answer. Getting help is the answer.*

**S**UICIDE is a serious public health problem that affects people in all age groups, even young people. For youth between the ages of 10 and 24, suicide is the third leading cause of death. It results in approximately 4,600 lives lost each year.

Deaths from suicide are only part of the problem. More young people survive suicide attempts than actually die. In some cases people who survive suicide attempts are left with permanent mental or physical damage. A nationwide survey of youth in grades 9–12 found that 16% of students reported seriously considering suicide, 13% reported creating a plan, and 8% reporting trying to take their own life in the 12 months preceding the survey. Each year, approximately 157,000 youth between the ages of 10 and 24 receive medical care for self-inflicted injuries.

### Suicide Risk Factors:

- A history of depression or other mental illness or personality disorders
- Alcohol or drug abuse
- Lack of health care, especially mental health and substance abuse treatment
- Lack of social support and a sense of isolation
- Being afraid, ashamed, or embarrassed to ask for help
- Impulsive or aggressive tendencies
- Easy access to lethal methods

- Stressful life event (such as financial loss, job loss, major health problems, loss of a relationship)
- Previous suicide attempts
- A family history of suicide
- Exposure to the suicidal behavior of others (in real life or in the media)

### Suicide Warning Signs:

- Threatening to hurt or kill him or herself
- Looking for ways to kill him/herself
- Talking or writing about death, dying or suicide
- Increased alcohol or drug use
- Feeling there is no reason for living; no sense of purpose in life
- Anxiety, agitation, unable to sleep or sleeping all the time
- Feeling trapped—like there's no way out; hopelessness
- Withdrawal from friends, family and society
- Rage, uncontrolled anger, seeking revenge
- Acting reckless or engaging in risky activities, seemingly without thinking
- Dramatic mood changes

### Factors That Prevent/Reduce Suicide

- Effective care for mental, physical, and substance use disorders
- Restricted access to highly lethal means of suicide

- Strong connections to family and community support
- Skills in problem solving, conflict resolution and handling problems in a non-violent way
- Cultural and religious beliefs that discourage suicide and support self-preservation

Most people are uncomfortable with the topic of suicide. But it is important to communicate openly. If you or someone you know is having thoughts of suicide get help immediately. Help is available. Do not wait! 🚑



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