



Suicide Prevention

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), suicide is the tenth leading cause of death in the US. That amounts to 42,773 suicides — nearly 117 a day. In addition, almost half a million people are hospitalized each year for intentionally harming themselves. This suggests that for every person who commits suicide, there are twelve who tried and failed. That's why it's so important to know the risk factors and warning signs for suicide.

Risk Factors

Mental and Physical Health Issues

Certain mental health conditions can put a person at risk for suicide. These include:

- Depression
- Schizophrenia
- Conduct disorder
- Anxiety disorders
- Bipolar disorder
- Borderline or antisocial personality disorder
- Psychotic disorders, or psychotic symptoms
- Substance abuse problems

Serious physical health conditions and limitations and chronic pain can also make people despondent enough to consider suicide.

Environmental Factors

Traumatic life events such as the death of a loved one, divorce, or job loss can trigger deep depression. Ongoing harassment, bullying, relationship problems, or physical or emotional abuse can all put someone at risk for suicide. Having a friend or relative commit suicide may trigger suicidal thoughts in a vulnerable person. Another environmental risk factor for a suicidal person is having firearms or potentially lethal drugs in the home.

Personal and Family History

Previous suicide attempts are an indicator that a person is at risk. A family history of depression and/or suicide attempts is another potential risk factor.

Warning Signs

Listen for Alarming Talk

A person contemplating suicide may complain about being a burden to others, being in unbearable physical or emotional pain, feeling hopeless, trapped, or humiliated, or having no reason to live. They may even talk about killing themselves.

Pay Attention to Uncharacteristic Behavior

You may notice the person acting restless, sleeping too much or too little, or isolating themselves from others. Increased use of alcohol or drugs is a red flag. Suicidal people sometimes give away prize possessions or call or stop by to say "goodbye."

Look Out for Worrisome Mood Changes

A person contemplating suicide will often seem depressed and/or anxious. They will lose interest in things and activities they normally enjoy. They may be unusually irritable or angry.





Battling the Holiday Blues

People with Seasonal Affective Disorder, or SAD, a condition in which people experience depressive symptoms in the winter, are especially vulnerable to the holiday blues. The holidays are supposed to be a time of family fun and festivities. However, they are also a time when unresolved family tensions and old dysfunctional behavior patterns tend to resurface. Simply preparing for the holidays can be stressful and even overwhelming. The tips below could help make your holidays a little happier:

Take Care of Yourself

Eat right, exercise, and get enough sleep. Go easy on the sweet treats and alcoholic beverages. Holiday weight gain will leave you feeling bluer in January.

Don't be a Perfectionist

You may not be able to coordinate your dream holiday, or make it just like last year's — so try to be open to new ideas and different traditions.

Acknowledge Your Feelings

If you have recently suffered a loss or professional setback, or someone in your family is seriously ill, it's hard to put on a happy face. Consider volunteering or seek community by attending social events and religious services if you are spending the holidays alone.

Accept Friends and Family as They Are

This is no time to right ancient wrongs or air long held grievances.

Plan Ahead

Set aside specific days and times for shopping, baking, and visiting. Decide in advance how much you want to spend on gift and food shopping.

Learn to Say No

Spreading yourself too thin may make you tired and resentful.

Take a Little "Me Time"

Go for a walk. Listen to music or read a book. Get a massage or a manicure. Even 15 minutes of quiet alone time can have a relaxing effect.

Don't Hesitate to Seek Professional Help

If you can't shake feelings of sadness, anxiety, or hopelessness, are having sleep issues, or having a tough time facing routine chores, seek help from a doctor or mental health professional.

CALIFORNIA SUICIDE STATISTICS

- Suicide is the 11th leading cause of death in our state. It is the 2nd leading cause of death in Californians ages 25–34.
- More than twice as many people die of suicide in California each year as by homicide.
- California ranks 43rd in the country for its suicide rate per 100,000: 10.46 deaths per the national average of 12.93.
- On average, one Californian commits suicide every two hours.

THE DARK SIDE OF THE GOLDEN GATE

More than 1,600 people have jumped to their deaths from the Golden Gate Bridge, the second most used suicide site in the world, after China's Nanjing Yangtze River Bridge. In 2008 the Golden Gate Bridge and Transportation District Board of Directors voted to install a safety net below the bridge as a suicide deterrent. The project has not yet been started and is expected to take three years to complete.

RESOURCES

Marin County Crisis Stabilization Unit
1-888-818-1115

MarinHealth Health Line / Physician Referral: **1-888-996-9644**

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention www.afsp.org

For more information or to volunteer locally, please contact:
www.sfbayarea@afsp.org

You Cannot Be Replaced
www.youcannotbereplaced.com/how-we-started

If you are in crisis, please call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at **1-800-273-TALK (8255)**