

Youth Suicides and Its Impact on School Age Children

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Today's Overview

- How to talk about suicide
- The facts about suicide
- Warning signs and risk factors
- Basic intervention skills to use with suicidal behavior
- Resources for help

Our Words Reflect Our Beliefs

Preventing suicide starts with our comfort in acknowledging and talking about suicide

Preferred:

Simply use the word

- “suicide”
- “died by”
- “suicide attempt”



What is Suicide and Attempted Suicide?

- Suicide is when people use direct violence at themselves with the intent to end their lives, and they die as a result of their actions.
- A suicide attempt is when people harm themselves with the intent to end their lives, but they do not die as a result of their actions.



Suicide Facts

- Suicide is the 10th leading cause of death in the US.
- Suicide affects all ages
- 54% of people who died by suicide did not have a known mental illness.
- 9.8 million adults thought about suicide, 2.8 million made a plan for suicide, and 1.3 million actually attempted

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Age

Adolescent – Young Adult

- [Suicide - Aged 15-24](#)
GA: 14.7
U.S. : 13.1
- [Suicide - Aged 25-34](#)
GA: 16.2
U.S. : 16.5
- [Suicide - Aged 35-44](#)
GA: 15.0
U.S. : 17.3

Suicides in Georgia vs. United States in 2018

- **Gender**
- [Suicide – Female](#) GA: 5.8
U.S.: 6.2
- [Suicide – Male](#) GA: 22.7
U.S.: 22.2

Deaths per 100,000 population

- Source:
- CDC WONDER Online Database, Underlying Cause of Death, Multiple Cause of Death files



Georgia vs United States

- **Race/Ethnicity**
- [Suicide – Asian](#) GA: 7.7
U.S. : 6.9
- [Suicide – Black](#) GA: 6.2
U.S. : 6.1
- [Suicide – Hispanic](#) GA: 7.4
U.S. : 6.8
- [Suicide – White](#) GA: 17.9
U.S. : 15.7
- Deaths per 100,000 population

Source:

CDC WONDER Online Database, Underlying Cause of Death, Multiple Cause of Death files



Georgia's Suicide Rate has Increased

- 16% increase since 1999
- Nearly 45,000 lives have been lost to suicide since 2016
- What are some reasons?
- Does Social Media play a role?
- What are some other possible reasons?

• Source: CDC, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Division of Violence Prevention



Attempted Suicides

25 to 100 non-fatal suicide attempts for all ages



Suicide

Attempted Suicides

Attempted Suicides

Among youth
15-25
years old
there are:



suicide
attempts
for every:



death by
suicide

Among
adults
75+ **years**
old
there are:



suicide
attempts
for every:

Non-Suicidal Self-Injury

- Distinct from suicidal intent, and yet.....
- Those who self-injure are at higher risk for suicidal behavior
- Reasons for Self-Injury are many:
 - Release of tension and anxiety
 - Physical pain versus emotional pain
 - Euphoria; Brain chemistry
 - Self punishment
 - To affect change in others

Risk Factors
Protective Factors
Warning Signs

Definitions

Risk Factors- Stressful events or situations that may increase the likelihood of a suicide attempt or death. (Not predictive!)

Protective Factors- Personal and social resources that promote resiliency and reduce the potential of suicide and other high-risk behaviors.

Warning Signs- the early *observable signs* that indicate increased risk of suicide for someone in the near-term. (Within hours or days.)



Risk factors are found in different domains....

- **Family Risk Factors**
- **Personal/Behavioral Risk Factors**
- **Environmental/Social Risk Factors**

Adolescent Risk Factors

Most Common Adolescent Risk Factors Include:

- Current or previous suicidal behavior
- Depression / anxiety / mood disorder
- Alcohol/drug use
- Conduct problems
- Ready access to lethal means
- Bullying

What Are Some Risk Factors For Suicide?

Risk Factors	Long Term (Unchanging)	Long Term (Modifiable)	Triggers
Family	<p>Family history of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suicide • Mental illness • Substance abuse • Race • Gender 	<p>Unrealistic parental expectations Abuse (emotional, physical, sexual)</p>	<p>Major family conflict Exposure to suicide of family member Anniversary of death Moving often</p>
Personal Behavioral	<p>Previous suicide attempt</p> <p>Loss through death, abandonment, divorce</p>	<p>Extreme perfectionism</p> <p>Mental illness Substance abuse Poor coping/social skills Impulsivity</p>	<p>Rejection</p> <p>Relationship break-up Current acute mental illness Severe stress/anxiety Isolation Increased use of substances</p>
Social/ Environmental	<p>Inconsistent, neglectful or abusive parenting</p> <p>Sexual orientation</p> <p>Gender identity</p> <p>Experience of repeated loss</p>	<p>Chronic severe stress</p> <p>Ongoing harassment</p>	<p>Bullying, Harassment Arrest/Incarceration Active suicide cluster in community Access to lethal means</p>

Suicide Risk Factors

- Children living in rural areas
- Identifying as LGB or transgender and gender non-conforming persons
- Social media could play a role in the rising suicide rate
- Persons diagnosed with anxiety and depression
- Children whose parent is being exposed to a military parent with PTSD, etc.



Suicide Risk Factors

- “Electronic” or Cyberbullying



- Addiction-- opioids, and other illegal drugs
- Medications to help people suffering from depression and anxiety that can lead to suicide.



Protective Factors

- *Protective Factors are what keep risk factors from becoming overwhelming! They are the “good things” that can counterbalance difficult risk factors.*
- Pets
- Spirituality or religious beliefs
- Protective factors help people get through difficult experiences and bounce back.
- The more protective factors people have, the better, but even ONE factor may make the difference between life and death.



Clear Signs Of A Suicidal Crisis

1. Someone threatening to hurt or kill themselves
2. Someone looking for the means (gun, pills, rope etc.) to kill themselves; has a clear plan.
3. Someone showing signs of distress/ agitation/ anxiety

If a someone mentions suicide (or not wanting to be around anymore)-take it seriously!!!!



Suicidal Ambivalence

- Problem solving becomes VERY difficult.
- Thinking becomes extreme, “either/or,” very “black vs. white” and finally “tunnel thinking” --- sees no other way out of his/her circumstances.
- They are often unable to see the needs or supports of others, but are consumed by the distress they feel, which is why it is coined as a “selfish act”.
- Suicidal people often debate whether they should live or die right up until the final moments of life.
- Some even want to live after they have taken lethal action.



Warning Signs

- **I** *Ideation / threatened or communicated*
- **S** *Substance abuse / excessive or increased?*

- **P** *Purposelessness / no reasons for living*
- **A** *Anxiety / agitation / insomnia*
- **T** *Trapped / feeling no way out*
- **H** *Hopelessness / nothing will ever change*

- **W** *Withdrawal from friends, family, society*
- **A** *Anger (uncontrolled) / rage / seeking revenge*
- **R** *Recklessness / risky acts / unthinking*
- **M** *Mood changes (dramatic)*

Keep Your Eyes and Ears Open

Direct clues:

- I wish I was dead
- I'm going to end it all
- I'm going to kill myself

Less Direct clues:

- Life's just too hard
- You'd be better off without me
- What's the point?

What IS Helpful

1) Show You Care—Listen carefully—Be genuine

“I’m concerned about you . . . about how you feel.”

2) Ask the Question—Be direct, caring and non-confrontational

“Are you thinking about suicide?”

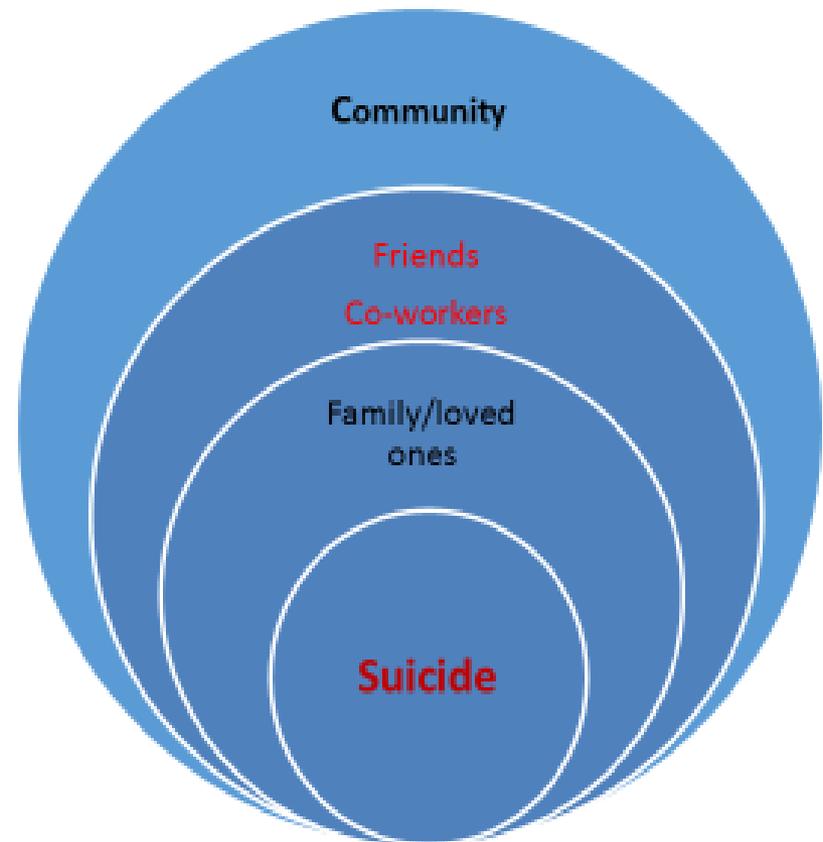
3) Get Help—Do not leave him/her alone

“You’re not alone. Let me help you.”



Effect of Suicide

- The Loss is:
 - Sudden
 - Unexpected
 - Premature
 - Self-inflicted
- The Reaction is:
 - Shock, hurt, anger
 - Loss and grief
 - Questions & torment
 - Guilt and regret



How Does Suicide Affect the Health of children?

Break up into Groups

- How does suicide affect the health of children?
- What are some signs that a child's health is being affected?

How Does Suicide Affect Groups?

- Boys are about four times more likely than girls to die from suicide.
- Girls are more likely to express suicidal thoughts and to make nonfatal attempts than boys
- Young adults aged 18- 29 are more likely to express suicidal thoughts, planning, and suicide attempts
- Other groups with higher rates of suicide are: American Indian and Alaska Natives, rural populations, and active or retired military personnel



Myths vs. Facts: True or False?

Break up into groups - True or False

- Talking openly about suicide will cause it.
- Anyone can learn to help someone who is struggling with thoughts of suicide.
- If someone decides that they want to take their own life, there's nothing we can do to stop them.
- If someone talks about suicide they don't need to be taken seriously.
- There are signs that we can look for that may indicate someone is considering suicide.



How YOU Can Be Supportive After a Suicide

- Acknowledge the loss
- Use the name of the deceased
- Share your presence
- Share a special memory/story of their life
- Acknowledge the good things
- Stay in touch over time
- Recommend grief support counseling or support groups for survivors



Resources for Help

Suicide Prevention Lifeline

1-800-273(TALK)8256

GA Crisis Line

1-800-715-4225

- Private counselors/therapist
- Faith Community
- Local Health Center

Resources

- The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention
- The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline
- The Georgia Department of Behavioral Health
- Skyland Trail Mental Health
- CDC, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Division of Violence Prevention