

# 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

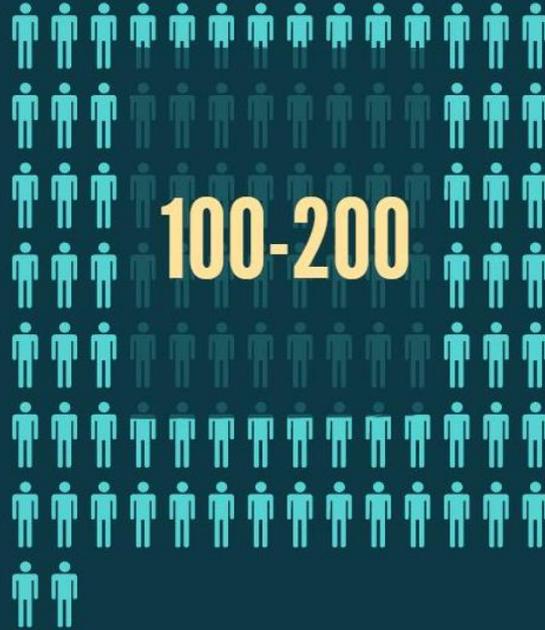


**Suicide**

**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?*

<b>Risk Factors</b>	<b>Long Term (Unchanging)</b>	<b>Long Term (Modifiable)</b>	<b>Triggers</b>
<b>Family</b>	<p><b>Family history of:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suicide</li> <li>• Mental illness</li> <li>• Substance abuse</li> </ul> <p>Race Gender</p>	<p><b>Unrealistic parental expectations</b> Abuse (emotional, physical, sexual)</p>	<p><b>Major family conflict</b> Exposure to suicide of family member Anniversary of death Moving often</p>
<b>Personal Behavioral</b>	<p><b>Previous suicide attempt</b></p> <p><b>Loss</b> through death, abandonment, divorce</p>	<p><b>Extreme perfectionism</b></p> <p>Mental illness Substance abuse Poor coping/social skills Impulsivity</p>	<p><b>Rejection</b> <b>Relationship break-up</b> Current acute mental illness Severe stress/anxiety Isolation Increased use of substances</p>
<b>Social/ Environmental</b>	<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><b>Bullying, Harassment</b> <b>Arrest/Incarceration</b> 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?”

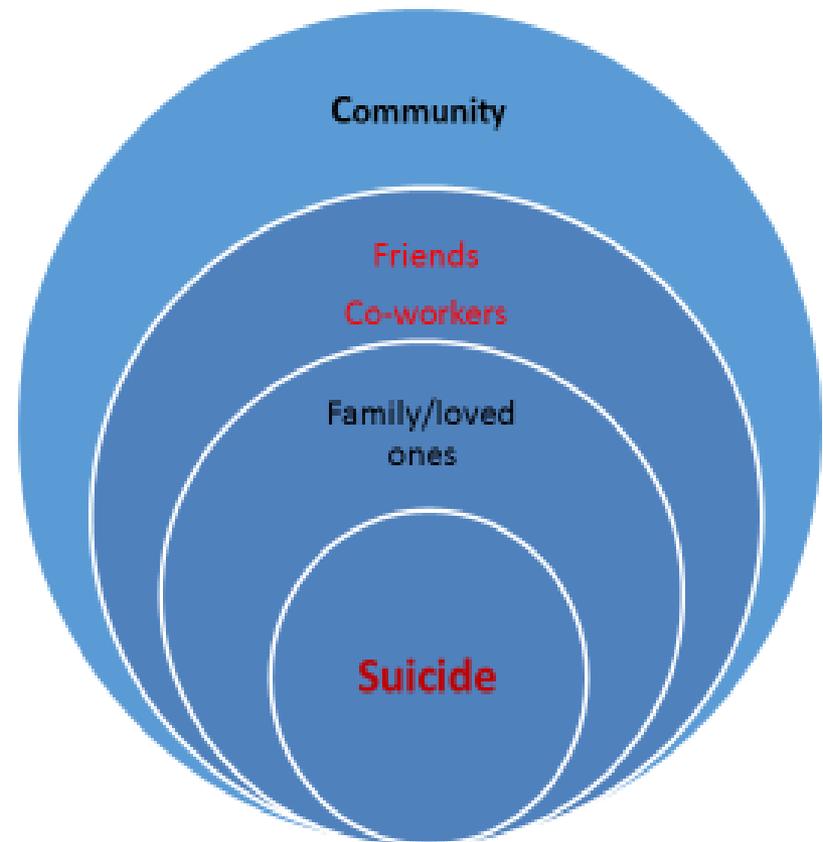
**3) Get Help—Do not leave him/her alone**

“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