A major, preventable mental health problem

Facts about suicide and suicide prevention among teens and young adults.

Some common questions and answers about suicide:

a: How common is suicide in children and teens?

In 2007, suicide was the third leading cause of death for young people ages 15–24. Suicide accounted for 4,140 deaths (12 percent) of the total 34,598 suicide deaths in 2007.
While these numbers may make suicide seem common, it is important to realize that suicide and suicidal behavior are not healthy or typical responses to stress.

a: What are some of the risk factors for suicide?

Risk factors vary with age, gender, or ethnic group. They may occur in combination or change over time. Some important risk factors are:

- Depression and other mental disorders
- Substance abuse disorder (often in combination with other mental disorders)
- Prior suicide attempt
- Family history of suicide
- Family violence including physical or sexual abuse
- Firearms in the home
- Incarceration
- Exposure to suicidal behavior of others, such as family members or peers.

However, it is important to note that many people who have these risk factors are not suicidal.

a: What are signs to look for?

The following are some of the signs you might notice in yourself or a friend that may be reason for concern.

- Feelings of hopelessness or worthlessness, depressed mood, poor self esteem or guilt
- Not wanting to participate in family or social activities
- Changes in sleeping and eating patterns: too much or too little
- Feelings of anger, rage, need for revenge
- Feeling exhausted most of the time
- Trouble with concentration, problems academically or socially in school
- Feeling listless, irritable
- Regular and frequent crying
- Not taking care of yourself
- Reckless, impulsive behaviors
- Frequent physical symptoms such as headaches or stomach aches.

Seeking help is a sign of strength, if you are concerned, go with your instincts, get help!



NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF MENTAL HEALTH



a: What can I do for myself or someone else?

If you are concerned, immediate action is very important. Suicide can be prevented and most people who feel suicidal demonstrate warning signs. Recognizing some of these warning signs is the first step in helping yourself or someone you care about.

If you are in crisis and need help: call this toll-free number, available 24 hours a day, every day **1-800-273-TALK (8255)** or go to: **http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org.** You will reach the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, a service available to anyone. You may call for yourself or for someone you care about and all calls are confidential.

Reprints

This publication is in the public domain and may be reproduced or copied without permission from NIMH. We encourage you to reproduce it and use it in your efforts to improve public health. Citation of the National Institute of Mental Health as a source is appreciated. However, using government materials inappropriately can raise legal or ethical concerns, so we ask you to use these guidelines:

- NIMH does not endorse or recommend any commercial products, processes, or services, and our publications may not be used for advertising or endorsement purposes.
- NIMH does not provide specific medical advice or treatment recommendations or referrals; our materials may not be used in a manner that has the appearance of such information.
- NIMH requests that non-Federal organizations not alter our publications in ways that will jeopardize the integrity and "brand" when using the publication.

- Addition of non-Federal Government logos and website links may not have the appearance of NIMH endorsement of any specific commercial products or services or medical treatments or services.
- Images used in publications are of models and are used for illustrative purposes only. Use of some images is restricted.

If you have questions regarding these guidelines and use of NIMH publications, please contact the NIMH Information Resource Center at 1-866-615-6464 or e-mail at **nimhinfo@nih.gov.**

For more information on suicide

Visit the National Library of Medicine's MedlinePlus **http://medlineplus.gov** En Español **http://medlineplus.gov/spanish**

For information on clinical trials http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/trials/index.shtml

National Library of Medicine clinical trials database http://www.clinicaltrials.gov

Information from NIMH is available in multiple formats. You can browse online, download documents in PDF, and order materials through the mail. Check the NIMH website at http://www.nimh.nih.gov for the latest information on this topic and to order publications. If you do not have Internet access please contact the NIMH Information Resource Center at the numbers listed below.

National Institute of Mental Health

Science Writing, Press & Dissemination Branch 6001 Executive Boulevard Room 8184, MSC 9663 Bethesda, MD 20892-9663 Phone: 301-443-4513 or 1-866-615-NIMH (6464) toll-free TTY: 301-443-8431 or 1-866-415-8051 toll-free FAX: 301-443-4279 E-mail: **nimhinfo@nih.gov** Website: **http://www.nimh.nih.gov**



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES National Institutes of Health National Institute of Mental Health

18 DE