



## ADAA Statement on Suicide

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Suicide is a significant problem in the U.S. and around the world. Tragically, suicide rates continue to rise. Suicide is currently the 10<sup>th</sup> leading cause of death across all age groups, the 3<sup>rd</sup> leading cause of death among 10-14 year olds, and the 2<sup>nd</sup> leading cause of death among 15-34 year olds. Across all age groups, almost three times as many people die from suicide than homicide. The impact of suicide goes beyond the actual death. For every death by suicide, it is estimated that there are 25 suicide attempts, which have their own emotional and physical consequences. Suicide deaths and attempts also have a significant impact on family members and friends, who are often left with a number of unanswered questions in addition to the loss of a loved one. Additional information about suicide rates is available here:

<http://www.suicidology.org/Portals/14/docs/Resources/FactSheets/2015/2015datagsv1.pdf?ver=2017-01-02-220151-870>

### What Causes Suicide?

Unfortunately, there is no simple answer to this. Suicide is likely the result of a number of influences acting together rather than any single factor that can be focused on in isolation. Therefore, rather than focusing on a single “cause” of suicide, we should probably be focused on constellations of risk factors and warning signs (<http://www.suicidology.org/resources/warning-signs>). A common mnemonic for these, provided by the American Association of Suicidology, is:

**I** Ideation  
**S** Substance Abuse  
**P** Purposelessness  
**A** Anxiety  
**T** Trapped  
**H** Hopelessness  
**W** Withdrawal  
**A** Anger  
**R** Recklessness  
**M** Mood Changes

More generally, anyone actively thinking or talking about killing themselves should seek help.

### Common Suicide Myths

*Myth:* Suicide only happens in certain demographic groups.

*Fact:* Suicide occurs across all age, racial/ethnic, cultural, and socioeconomic groups.

*Myth:* Someone who talks about suicide is not really serious and is just trying to get attention.

*Fact:* Any talk of suicide must be taken seriously because it can save a life.

*Myth:* Asking someone about suicidal ideation will make them more suicidal.

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*Fact:* Asking about suicidal ideation does not make someone more suicidal and can allow that person to get help.

*Myth:* Suicide is unpredictable and cannot be prevented.

*Fact:* Most suicidal individuals talk to someone about their thoughts before acting. This provides an opportunity to help.

### **Recommendations for Reporting on Suicide in the Media**

As noted by the [American Association for Suicidology](#), media portrayals can be helpful in correcting public misperceptions and myths of suicide, but can also increase risk additional suicides in at-risk individuals. To maximize the benefits of reporting and reduce the risks, media coverage should focus the facts of the death and avoid dramatic headlines and should seek to highlight resources available for those who may need them. The number for the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is 1-800-273-8255. For additional recommendations and providers who can help, please refer to:

- Suicidolgy.org:  
[http://www.suicidology.org/Portals/14/RecommendationsForReportingOnSuicide\\_swm.pdf?ver=2015-06-18-133922-470](http://www.suicidology.org/Portals/14/RecommendationsForReportingOnSuicide_swm.pdf?ver=2015-06-18-133922-470)
- ADAA's Find-A-Therapist search tool: <https://anxietydepressionassoc.site-ym.com/?page=FATMain>