# Suicide

NAMI
National Alliance on Mental Illness
**MINNESOTA**

**1919 University Avenue West, Suite 400, St. Paul, MN 55104    Tel. 651-645-2948 or 888-NAMIHELPS    www.namimn.org**

*If you or someone you know needs immediate help, call The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255), text "MN" to 741741 or call \*\*CRISIS (\*\*274747) from a cell phone*

Suicide is a major public health crisis. Someone experiencing suicidal thoughts or behaviors should seek immediate assistance from a health or mental health care provider.

## Know the Warning Signs
- Threats or comments about killing themselves
- Changes in personality, for instance going from being very outgoing to very shy.
- Increased alcohol and drug use
- Aggressive behavior
- Making dangerous choices. Acting without thinking.
- Difficulty concentrating.
- Grades going down at school.
- Withdrawing from friends, family, and community
- Dramatic mood swings
- Talking, writing, or thinking about death
- Giving away things, such as a loved item or account passwords
- Planning of how they will die
- Feeling alone or thinking others will be better off without them

## Who is at Risk for Suicide?
Anyone can be at risk for suicide. Common risk factors include:
- **Substance use** which can cause mental highs and lows that make suicidal thoughts worse
- **Intoxication** (more than 1 in 3 people who die from suicide are found to be intoxicated)
- **Access to firearms** (the majority of completed suicides involve the use of a firearm)
- **Chronic medical illness**
- **Gender** (though more women than men attempt suicide, men are four times more likely to die by suicide)
- **History of trauma or abuse**
- **Stress for long periods of time**
- **Recent tragedy or loss**
- **A family history of suicide**

## How can suicide be prevented?
- **Know the warning signs:** Notice when those around you are showing symptoms above.
- **Make it hard for the person to get what they need to attempt suicide,** this means removing
- **Psychotherapy** such as cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) and dialectical behavior therapy
- **Medication** can be used to treat underlying depression and anxiety.

## How do I ask someone if they are thinking about suicide?
- Ask the question directly, "Are you thinking about suicide?", "Are you thinking about killing yourself?"
- Do **NOT** ask in a way that says, "I want you to say no." **Avoid** "You're not thinking about suicide are you?" or "You wouldn't do anything stupid, would you?"

- Asking a person about suicide will not plant the idea in their head.
- If you cannot ask the question, find someone who can

**What do I do if someone says they are suicidal?**
- Call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-8255
- If it is NOT an emergency, call your County Crisis Team
  - Every county has a crisis team. They can help find resources and services. Find your county crisis number at https://mn.gov/dhs/people-we-serve/adults/health-care/mental-health/resources/crisis-contacts.jsp
- If it IS an emergency, call 911
  - Say, "This is a mental health emergency."
  - Ask for a Crisis Intervention Team (CIT). They have training on how to help people who are thinking about suicide.

**What do I do if a friend is hospitalized for being suicidal?**
- Treat this like you would any other hospital visit:
  - Send cards, flowers, etc.
  - Visit them
  - Make them meals
- Get other people involved
  - Ask, "Who else might be able to help?"
  - Could be your friends' doctor, family, friends, community/faith leaders, etc.

**Useful phone numbers:**
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-8255 (English) 1-888-628-9454 (Spanish)
- Crisis Text line: Text MN to 741741
- Call **Crisis to reach nearest Metro Area crisis team
- Call your county mental health crisis number. https://mn.gov/dhs/people-we-serve/adults/health-care/mental-health/resources/crisis-contacts.jsp

**Websites:**
- **Means Matter:** meansmatter.org
- **American Foundation for Suicide Prevention:** afsp.org
- **National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention:** actionallianceforsuicideprevention.org
- **SAVE:** save.org
- **Suicide Prevention Resource Center:** sprc.org
- **The Trevor Project:** thetrevorproject.org

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