



Nebraska Resources

Nebraska Youth Suicide Prevention Project:
Youthsuicideprevention.nebraska.edu

Nebraska State Suicide Prevention Coalition:
Suicideprevention.nebraska.edu



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SUICIDE PREVENTION



**For Youth, Schools,
& Families**

What You Need to Know

Facts About Youth Suicide

Suicide is the second leading cause of death among college students and the third leading cause of death among all youth aged 15-24 years. In the US, only accidents and homicides claim more young lives.

Youth suicide rates vary widely among different racial and ethnic groups.

Nearly 4,000 people aged 15-24 die by suicide each year in the US, and males die by suicide almost six times more frequently than females.

- 20 percent of American high school students report having seriously considered suicide during the previous 12 months.
- 8 percent of high school students make a suicide attempt.
- 70 percent of youth who make a suicide attempt are frequent alcohol and/or other drug abusers.
- Over 90 percent of youth who die by suicide had at least one psychiatric illness at the time of death. In about half of such cases, the psychiatric illness was present, although often unrecognized, for two years or more.

The most common diagnoses among youth are depression, substance abuse, and conduct disorders.

Youth Suicide Warning Signs

- Talking about or making plans for suicide.
- Expressing hopelessness about the future.
- Displaying severe or overwhelming emotional pain or distress.
- Showing worrisome behavioral cues or marked changes in behavior, including these significant warning signs:
 - Withdrawal from or changing social connections or situations.
 - Changes in sleep (increased or decreased).
 - Anger or hostility that seems out of character or out of context.
 - Recent increased agitation or irritability.

Question, Persuade, Refer

Ask The Question

- » "I have the feeling you are thinking about suicide but are having trouble bringing it up."
- » "Are you thinking about suicide?"
- » "Sometimes people in certain situations feel suicidal. Have you been thinking about killing yourself?"

Listen

- » Listen and look for warning signs / risk factors.
- » Ask what is causing the distress.

Ask About Reasons for Living & Plans for Suicide

- » Find out what is important to the person and why they may choose to live.
- » Ask "Do you have a plan to kill yourself?"
- » Ask how, where, when, and if they have the means in place. (Do you have a gun/ pills/ rope or other means?)

Take Action

- » Remove means like guns and pills.
- » Offer your support in obtaining help from a professional.
- » Don't leave the person alone once you have determined he or she is at risk.
- » Remind the person that seeking help isn't a sign of weakness and that chances for recovery are excellent.

Refer

- » Refer the person to: Call 1-800-273-TALK (8255) for the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline.