

Suicide Statistics, Symptoms & Signs

College Statistics

- Female children and adolescents are approximately 4 times as likely to attempt suicide as males. However, males are more than 4 times as likely to complete suicide and tend to choose more lethal means. Source: Moskos, et al., 2004.
- College students with suicidal ideation are more likely to engage in high risk behaviors, such as driving or boating while intoxicated, engaging in physical fights, carrying weapons, and failing to wear seatbelts. Source: Centers for Disease Control.
- 10.3% of students considered suicide during the prior 12 months. 6.7% of these students made plans to harm themselves. Source: Centers for Disease Control, 1997.

Suicide Can Be More Common in Some Populations

- Increasing among people ages 15-24
- People who are living alone or are socially isolated
- Native Americans and Euro-Americans
- The elderly
- Gays, lesbians, bisexuals
- Higher among those who are separated, divorced or widowed than for those who are married or partnered
- The unemployed

Individual & Clinical Risk Factors

- History of suicide attempts
- Severe feelings of hopelessness, guilt, anxiety, anger or sadness
- Family history of suicide
- Overuse of alcohol
- Terminal illness or chronic physical or emotional pain
- Experiencing loss and/or separations
- Attraction to death

Suicide can be also be triggered by a number of things including:

- Stressful events, such as a failed exam or failure to get a job
- Crises in significant social or family relationships
- Interpersonal losses
- Changes in body chemistry
- High levels of anger or anxiety

Depression alone or in combination with aggressive behavior, substance abuse and/or anxiety is found in over half of all suicides. If depression is present, substance abuse, anxiety, impulsivity, rage, hopelessness and desperation may increase the risks of suicide. (Source: The Jed Foundation)

Suicide Warning Signs

- Appearing depressed or sad most of the time.
(Untreated depression is the number one cause for suicide.)

- Withdrawing from family and friends.
- Sleeping too much or too little.
- Feeling tired most of the time.
- Gaining or losing a significant amount of weight.
- Making statements such as these:
 - ? "I can't go on any longer."
 - ? "I hate this life."
 - ? "There's no point to this stupid life."
 - ? "Everyone would be better off without me."
 - ? "Life is not worth living."
 - ? "Nothing matters anymore."
 - ? "I don't care about anything anymore."
 - ? "I want to die."
 - ? --And any mention of suicide--
- Writing notes or poems about suicide or death.
- Acting compulsively.
- Losing interest in most activities.
- Giving away prized possessions.
- Writing a will.
- No sense of humor.
- Facing a perceived "humiliating" situation.
- Facing a perceived "failure."
- Feeling excessive guilt or shame.
- Acting irrationally.
- Being preoccupied with death or dying.
- Behaving recklessly.
- Irritability
- Frequently complaining about headaches, stomachaches, etc.
- Neglecting personal appearance.
- A dramatic change in personal appearance.
- A dramatic change in personality.
- Performing poorly at work or in school.
- Abusing alcohol or drugs.
- Feeling hopeless.
- Expressing hopelessness
- Inability to concentrate.

Please note that some of these behaviors can occur for other reasons besides suicide only, while others are specific warning signs of suicide.

By Courtney Gasser, M.A.
University of Oregon Counseling & Testing Center