

AMERICAN FOUNDATION FOR Suicide Prevention

MORE THAN SAD

Suicide Prevention Education for Teachers and Other School Personnel

Goals

- Understand the scope of youth suicide
- Identify the warning signs and risk factors of youth suicide
- Know how to refer at-risk students
- Get an overview of mental health treatments

A Few Key Terms:

- **Suicidal ideation:** Thoughts of engaging in suicide-related behavior.
- **Suicide behaviors:** Behaviors related to suicide, including preparatory acts, as well as suicide attempts and death.
- **Nonsuicidal self-injury:** Self-injury with no intent to die.
- **Suicide attempt:** A nonfatal self-directed potentially injurious behavior with any intent to die as a result of the behavior. A suicide attempt may or may not result in injury.
- **Suicide:** Death caused by self-directed injurious behavior with any intent to die as a result of the behavior.

Suicide in the U.S. (2013)

- 41,149 reported suicides
- 13.0 suicides per 100,000 population
- 32,055 (or 77.9%) of all deaths by suicide are male
- 51.5% (21,175) of reported suicides were by firearm

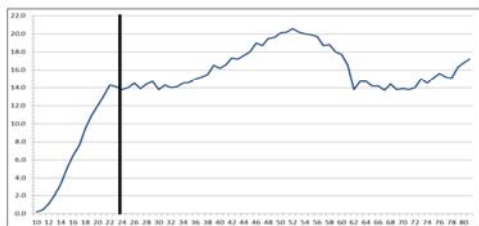
Youth aged 15-24

- 4,878 reported suicides

Most recent CDC suicide date is from 2013

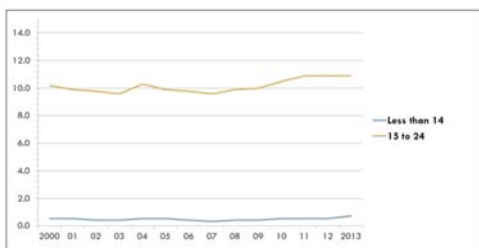
U.S. Suicide Rates

Ages 10-85

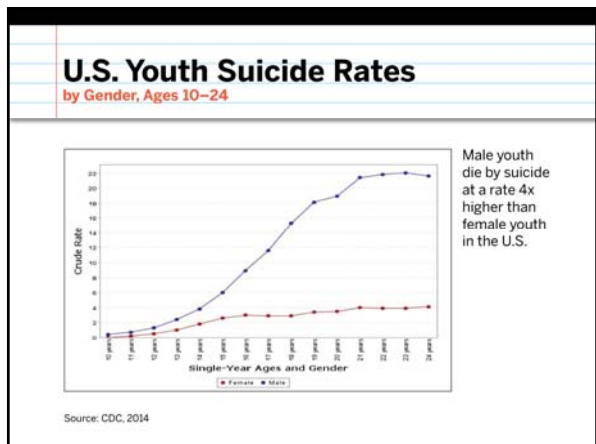


Rate per 100,000
Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2014

U.S. Youth Suicide Rates



Rate per 100,000
Source: CDC data, 2014



Youth Suicide Rates

by Race/Ethnicity (Ages 15-24)

Ethnic Group	Suicide Rate per 100,000
American Indian/Alaskan Native	19.4
White	12.0
Asian/Pacific Islander	7.7
Black	7.1
Hispanic	6.8

Suicide Attempts

- For every suicide, it is estimated that there are 25 attempts.
- No complete count is kept of attempts because many go unreported or untreated.

Youth Suicide Attempts



- For every suicide, 100-200 make an attempt.
- In 2013, over 180,000 youth ages 10-24 were hospitalized for self-inflicted injuries.

National Youth Risk Behavior Survey



- **17%** reported having seriously considered attempting suicide in the previous year.
- **13.6%** reported having made a plan for a suicide attempt in the previous year.
- **8%** of high school students who completed the Youth Risk Behavior Survey in 2013 reported having attempted suicide one or more times in the last year.

At-Risk Populations

- The majority of all deaths by suicide are men.
- Women attempt suicide 3x more often than men.
- Attempts are 2-6x more frequent among youth who identify as gay, lesbian or bisexual, than among heterosexual youth.
- Based on a 2011 survey of high school students, 15.6% of Hispanic female students reported attempting suicide.

Suicidal Ideation **is** life threatening and must be taken seriously each time.

Suicidal Ideation

- Suicidal ideation is often communicated before an attempt.
- Outside of that communication, ideation (and the youth's actual level of distress) is often well hidden.

**More Than Sad:
Preventing Teen Suicide**


- Provides an overview of mental health conditions in teens.
- Identifies behaviors that suggest a student may be at risk for suicide.
- Shows what a teacher and other school personnel can do to help a student at risk.

Watch the Film

MORE THAN SAD
Preventing Teen Suicide




Risk Factors for Teen Suicide



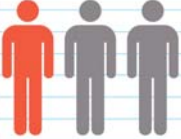
- A key risk factor for all age groups is an undiagnosed, untreated or ineffectively treated mental disorder.
- 9 out of 10 people who die by suicide have a treatable mental health condition at the time of their death.

Common Mental Health Conditions



Suicide risk in teens is most clearly linked to 7 mental conditions, which can co-occur together, increasing risk further:

- Major Depressive Disorder
- Conduct Disorder
- Bipolar Disorder
- Eating Disorders
- Generalized Anxiety Disorder
- Schizophrenia
- Substance Use Disorders



2 out of **3** teens with depression don't get treatment.

Mental Health Treatment


- Depressed teens can show improvement in 4-6 weeks with psychotherapy alone.
- Most others experience significant reduction of symptoms with antidepressant medication.
- Medication is essential in treating severe depression and other serious mental health conditions like bipolar disorder and schizophrenia.

Mental Health Treatment

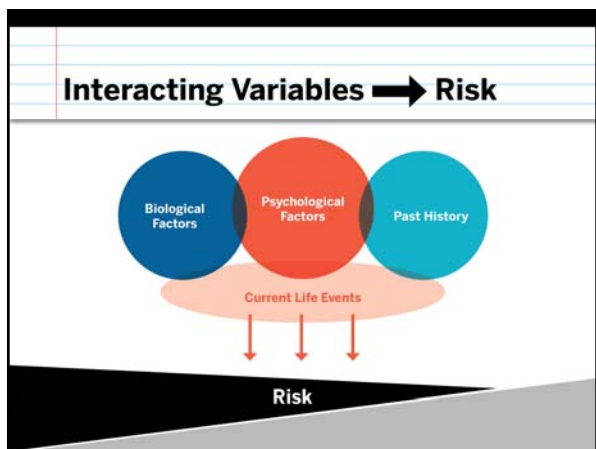


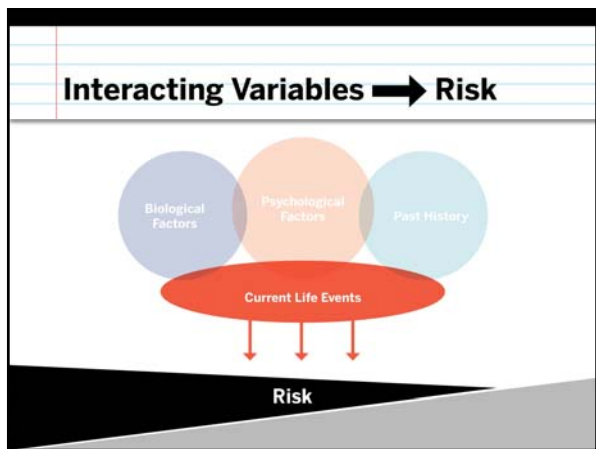
- Treatment is effective for 8 out of 10 people with depression.
- No single approach works for everyone; sometimes the person will need to try different treatments.
- Mental health conditions can recur, even if effectively treated at one point in time.

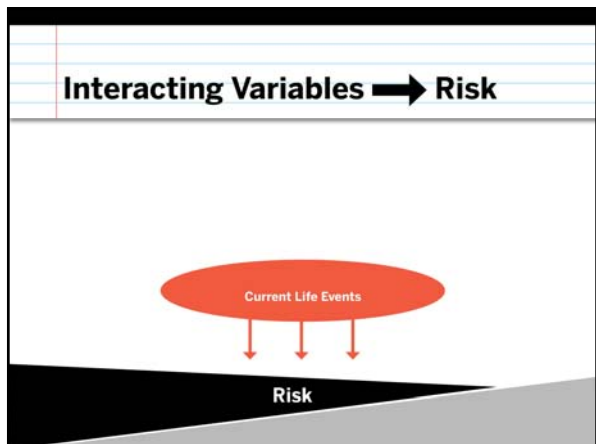
Living a Healthy Lifestyle



Exercise, yoga, breathing exercises, and changes in diet can improve mood and relieve anxiety and stress.







An Environmental Factor: Bullying

Among middle-school students, suicidal ideation and behavior are:

- More common in **bully-victims** and physically aggressive bullies
- Less common in verbal bullies and victims who don't bully others


Among youth who were bullied during high school, suicidal ideation and behavior was later identified **only in those who had shown symptoms of depression at the time the bullying occurred.**

Identifying At-Risk Students

Mental health symptoms are often misinterpreted as


- Normal adolescent mood swings
- Laziness
- Poor attitude
- Immaturity

Suicide Warning Signs



Suicide **risk factors** endure over some period of time, while **warning signs** signal **imminent suicide risk**.

Warning Signs: Talk



If a person talks about:

- Killing themselves
- Having no reason to live
- Being a burden to others
- Feeling trapped
- Unbearable pain

Warning Signs: Behavior



Be on the alert for these behavior changes:

- Increasing use of alcohol or drugs
- Looking for a way to end their life, such as searching online for materials or means
- Acting recklessly
- Withdrawing from activities
- Isolating from family and friends
- Sleeping too much or too little
- Visiting or calling people to say goodbye
- Giving away prized possessions
- Increasing aggressive behavior

Warning Signs: Mood



People who are considering suicide often display one or more of the following moods:

- Depression
- Loss of interest
- Rage
- Irritability
- Humiliation
- Anxiety

More Than Sad

- Provides a **model** for the effective recognition and treatment of depression in teens.
- Depicts **ideal** help-seeking behaviors among teens, and **ideal** responses among school personnel, physicians and mental health professionals.
- May contrast with what some families have encountered in seeking help for their teens.

Watch the Film




**MORE
THAN SAD**
Teen Depression



Barriers To Treatment For Teens

- Neither teens nor the adults who are close to them recognize the symptoms of their treatable illness.
- Fear of what treatment might involve.
- Belief that nothing can help.
- They don't see help-seeking as a sign of strength.
- They are embarrassed.
- Believe that adults won't understand.




How You Can Help A Student At Risk

-  1. **Identify** students whose behavior suggests the presence of a mental health condition.
-  2. **Express concern.**
-  3. **Refer** the student to a mental health professional for evaluation and treatment.

What Can Help Students Stay Safe?


- Receiving effective mental health care when needed.
- Fostering positive connections to family, peers, community, and social institutions that foster resilience.
- Creating safe and supportive school and community environments.
- Helping teens to cultivate problem-solving skills.
- Keeping open communication re: mental health concerns.

How Schools Can Prevent Suicide

-  **1. Educate Students about Mental Health Conditions.**
Present More Than Sad: Teen Depression in the classroom with students grades 9-12.
-  **2. Educate Parents about Mental Health Conditions and Suicide Risk.**
Present More Than Sad: Parent Education at a parent meeting.
-  **3. Create a Safe Place for Youth Seeking Help for Themselves or Their Friends.**

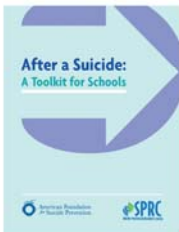
Model School District Policy On Suicide Prevention

Recommended language for school district policies that address suicide prevention, risk assessment, and how to respond to suicidal behavior in youth.



After A Suicide: A Toolkit For Schools

A guide that shows what a school should do in the aftermath of a suicide to help students, faculty, and staff heal and to decrease the risk of contagion.



Signs Matter: Early Detection

- An online school-based training program (similar to a webinar)
- Suitable for K-12 educators
- Meets the two-hour requirement for teacher training that is mandated in many states
- Contains student-acted vignettes, expert analysis and commentary
- Requires successful completion of a post-test to measure knowledge
- For more information about how to purchase this program, visit www.afsp.org/signsmatter



Accessing Help 24/7

1-800-273-TALK
crisischat.org





Help us improve our program by
completing the feedback form.

morethansad.org