



GET THE FACTS ABOUT

SUICIDE

IN THIS ISSUE:

- Teens & Suicide
- The Facts
- Warning Signs
- How to Help
- Suicide Prevention
- Resources



TEENS AND SUICIDE

Native communities have always represented unity and strength. Today we must come together to help those in need. Suicide is a problem in Native communities and it can be prevented.

You can help by knowing and watching for the warning signs, talking about them, and getting connected with family, friends, and your culture. You can make all the difference.



THE FACTS

Fact 1

In most cases, a person thinking about suicide has shown signs that they were in trouble before they committed suicide. Signs of suicide may not be what you expect or can be hard to spot if you don't know what they are. The first step to prevent suicide in your community is learning and talking about suicide.

Fact 2

When someone is thinking about suicide, their choice isn't caused by a concerned friend or family member asking, "are you thinking about suicide?" Often, by the time someone asks that question the person has been thinking about suicide for a long time. Not asking if someone is thinking about suicide is more dangerous than asking.

Fact 3

Every suicide attempt should be taken seriously. In fact, a previous attempt for suicide is a high risk factor for a potential suicide. Part of being a good friend is listening to your friends when they need help. Someone who attempts suicide is in need of help. Ask a trusted adult for help if a friend tells you they attempted suicide.

Fact 4

The best way to prevent suicide is to learn about risk factors, warning signs, how to talk to a friend or family about suicide, and taking action to help. Most people who attempt suicide don't want to die, they just want to stop the hurt that is leading them to suicide.

WARNING SIGNS

Risk Factors

- Previous attempts
- Knowing someone who attempted or died of suicide
- Exposure to sexual or physical violence
- History of depression or mental disorders
- Substance abuse
- Experiencing prejudice or discrimination for 2SLGBTQ+ identity
- Physical or chronic illness

Sudden Warning Signs

- Making threats or talking about harming oneself
- Searching for ways of killing oneself with fire arms or medications
- Asking persistent questions about suicide, death and dying
- Giving away valued personal possessions

Other Warning Signs

- Feelings of hopelessness and that there is no way out, having no purpose and no will to live
- Anger or rage that appears to be uncontrolled, or vengeance-seeking
- Withdrawal; feeling lonely and troubled
- Engaging in reckless and dangerous behavior, such as going snowmachining under the influence or driving at high speeds, with no thought of consequences
- Mood changes, anxiety, agitation with little sleep or too much sleep
- Depression



HOW TO HELP

ASK

Talk to the person you are worried about. It's important to ask, "Are you thinking about suicide?" Practice a few times; you'll get more confident. Make sure you don't leave them alone if they say "yes." Ask an adult to help you keep them safe by limiting access to guns, medications, and poisons.

TALK

Remember to keep checking up on them. You might have to check on the person you're worried about a few different times. When you are talking, remember not to judge, give advice, or ask "why?"- this can make the person you're worried about feel defensive or not want to talk. Remember- you can ask for help too. Another friend or trusted adult can help you talk to the person you're concerned about.

ACT

For many people, going to get help can overwhelm them with lots of different feelings. This is a good time to ask a trusted adult for resources to help. Then you can share those resources with the person you're worried about and assist them with getting the help they need.



Remember...

It is important to always have a trusted adult aware of what's going on with you and the person you're worried about.



DEPRESSION

We all go through ups and downs with our moods. Sadness is a normal reaction to our everyday struggles, setback, and disappointments. Many people use the word "depression" to explain these feelings, but **depression is much more than just sadness.**

Some people describe depression as "living in a black hole" or having a feeling of impending doom. Males, in particular, may even feel angry, aggressive, and restless. Depression can look different for lots of people and can make them act in ways that are out of character or abnormal for them.

Depression is different from normal sadness. Depression impacts your day-to-day life and interests with your ability to work, study, eat, sleep, or have fun. The feeling of helplessness, hopelessness, and worthlessness are intense and unrelenting, with little, if any, relief.

Sometimes when someone is depressed, thoughts of suicide can start. Even though depression makes you feel like there is no end or no way out, there is an end to feeling that way through seeking help and talking to a mental health professional.

SUICIDE PREVENTION

COMMUNITY

Tribal communities can prevent suicide by staying connected to each other and our cultures. Here's what you can do to strengthen your community:

- Stay connected with your friends and family
- Participate in your culture's traditional activities
- Ask an elder or an adult about your heritage
- Host an event about suicide awareness at your school or in your community
- Share the things about your culture that you're proud
- Be engaged with youth from across different Native communities
- Speak out against bullying
- Check out the resources in the factsheets to connect with other Native communities
- Be engaged with other Native youth about warning signs and how to ask, talk, and take action with the person you're worried about

HELPING YOURSELF

If you feel that you are at risk for suicide, or you have attempted suicide in the past, try these strategies to prevent you from suicide:

- Immediately reach out to a trusted person in your life that can support and help you
- Avoid alcohol and drugs
- Learn positive and constructive ways to control stress
- Seek treatment
- Make your home safe, such as creating a space for you that is filled with things that you enjoy
- Take 3 deep breaths and count to 10 to gather your thoughts
- Engage in your favorite activities
- Exercise
- Create a survival kit of objects and memories that bring you comfort or make you smile that you can take out in your darkest moments
- Create a list of people who love and support you, people you can call on in times of need

If this is an immediate emergency or you're trying to commit suicide, call 911 or 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

RELATIONSHIPS

- If the person you are dating is threatening to kill themselves at any time, talk to a trusted adult immediately.
- Don't stay together with someone because you are worried that they are suicidal; it is best to get yourself help from an adult to deal with it.
- If the person you are dating is suicidal it's not your job to fix them, but you can support them in getting help for themselves

RESOURCES

www.iknowmine.org

www.wernative.org

www.healthynativeyouth.org

www.helpguide.org/home-pages/suicide-prevention.htm

www.988Lifeline.org/help-Yourself/youth

Text NATIVE to 741741

