

WARNING SIGNS, RISK FACTORS, AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS OF SUICIDE



WARNING SIGNS

The warning signs of suicide are indicators that a person may be in acute danger and may urgently need help.

EMERGENCY WARNING SIGNS OF SUICIDE

Call 911 or the emergency service in your country if you see or hear the following:

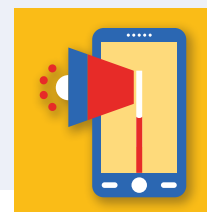
- Someone threatening to hurt or kill oneself or talking about wanting to die, especially if the person has a weapon or harmful object.
- Searching for ways to kill oneself by seeking access to lethal means, including online searching.
- Someone talking, writing, or posting on social media about death and suicide when these actions are out of the ordinary for the person.

WARNING SIGNS OF SUICIDE

- Talking about wanting to die or to kill oneself;
- Looking for a way to kill oneself;
- Talking about feeling hopeless or having no purpose;
- Talking about feeling trapped or being in unbearable pain;
- Talking about being a burden to others;
- Increasing the use of alcohol or drugs;
- Acting anxious, agitated, or reckless;
- Sleeping too little or too much;
- Withdrawing or feeling isolated;
- Showing rage or talking about seeking revenge; and
- Displaying extreme mood swings.

*This list of Warning Signs for Suicide was developed by an expert review and consensus process that included SAVE's Executive Director and was informed by a review of relevant research and literature. Additional information about the warning signs can be found in the following published article: Rudd, M. D., Berman, A. L., Joiner, T. E., Jr., Nock, M. K., Silverman, M. M., Mandrusiak, M., et al. (2006). Warning signs for suicide: Theory, research, and clinical applications. *Suicide and Life-Threatening Behavior*, 36(3), 255-262.*

If you or someone you know is in crisis,
call Lifeline (USA) at 1-800-273-8255 - OR - Text SAVE to 741-741
for 24/7, anonymous, free crisis support.





RISK FACTORS

Risk factors do not cause or predict a suicide, rather they are characteristics that make it more likely an individual will consider, attempt or die by suicide.

- Mental disorders, particularly mood disorders, schizophrenia, anxiety disorders and certain personality disorders
- Alcohol and other substance use disorders
- Hopelessness
- Impulsive and/or aggressive tendencies
- History of trauma or abuse
- Major physical or chronic illnesses
- Previous suicide attempt
- Family history of suicide
- Recent job or financial loss
- Recent loss of relationship
- Easy access to lethal means
- Local clusters of suicide
- Lack of social support and sense of isolation
- Stigma associated with asking for help
- Lack of health care, especially mental health and substance abuse treatment
- Cultural and religious beliefs, such as the belief that suicide is a noble resolution of a personal dilemma
- Exposure to others who have died by suicide (in real life or via the media and Internet)



PROTECTIVE FACTORS

Protective factors are characteristics that make a person less likely to engage in suicidal behavior. Moreover, protective factors can promote resilience and ensure connectedness with others during difficult times, thereby making suicidal behaviors less likely.

- Effective clinical care for mental, physical and substance use disorders
- Easy access to a variety of clinical interventions
- Restricted access to highly lethal means of suicide
- Strong connections to family and community support
- Support through ongoing medical and mental health care relationships
- Skills in problem solving, conflict resolution and handling problems in a non-violent way
- Cultural and religious beliefs that discourage suicide and support self-preservation

