



AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF SUICIDOLOGY

Dedicated to the Understanding and Prevention of Suicide

Some Facts about Suicide in the U.S.A.

Facts Based on Current Statistics

1. Currently there are slightly more than 30,000 suicides annually (83 suicides per day; or 1 suicide every 17 minutes), with 12 of every 100,000 Americans killing themselves.
2. Suicide rates in the U.S.A. can best be characterized as mostly stable over time with a slight tendency toward an increase.
3. Rates of suicide are highest in the western regions with the Mountain States highest.
4. Suicide is the eighth leading cause of death.
5. Males complete suicide at a rate four times that of females.
6. Firearms are currently the most often utilized method of suicide by essentially all groups (males, females, young, old, white, and non-white).
7. Suicide rates have traditionally decreased in times of war and increased in times of economic crises.
8. Suicide rates are the highest among the divorced, separated, and widowed and lowest among the married.
9. Rates of suicide are highest among the elderly (age 65 and over).
10. Elderly adults have rates of suicide of more than 50% higher than that of the nation as a whole.
11. Youth (ages 15-24) suicide rates increased more than 200% from the 1950's to the late 1970's. Since the late 1970's, suicide rates for youth have remained stable or slightly decreased.
12. Suicide ranks third as a cause of death among young (15-24) Americans behind accidents and homicide.
13. White suicide rates are approximately twice those of non-whites.
14. Native Americans (American Indians) are the racial/ethnic group with the highest overall suicide rate, but tribal group differences exist.
15. Blacks and Hispanics, when ranked among worldwide statistics and reporting, exhibit lower risk of suicides.
16. Psychological autopsy studies reflect that more than 90% of completed suicides had one or more mental disorders.

(Over Please)

Facts Based on Research Findings

- Although there are no official statistics on attempted (e.g., non-fatal actions suicide) it is generally estimated that there are at least 8 to 20 attempts for each death by suicide.
- Risk of attempted (nonfatal) suicide is greatest among females and the young.
- Females have generally been found to make 3 to 4 times as many attempts as males.
- Ratios of young attempted suicides to suicide deaths generally range between 100 to 1 and 200 to 1.
- Mental health diagnoses are generally associated with a higher rate of suicide.
- Groups/diagnosis at particular risk include: depression, schizophrenia, drug and/or chemical dependency, and panic disorders.
- Feelings of hopelessness (e.g., there is no solution to my problem) are found to be more predictive of suicide risk than a diagnoses of depression per se.
- The socially isolated are generally found to be at high risk of suicide.
- The vast majority of individuals who are suicidal often display clues and warning signs.

Other Issues

- The designation of "survivor of suicide" refers to the family members and friends who remain alive following the death of their loved on by suicide.
- It is not known how many survivors there are, but conservative estimates indicates that there are at least 4.4 million Americans who are survivors of a loved one's suicide.

American Association of Suicidology

The goal of the American Association of Suicidology (AAS) is to understand and prevent suicide. AAS promotes research, public awareness programs, education, and training for professionals, survivors, and all interested persons. AAS serves as a national clearinghouse for information on suicide. AAS has many resources and publications, which are available to its membership and the general public. For membership information, please contact:

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