

Questions about Life, Suicide is not the Answer

As we welcome in a new year, we welcome in new opportunities and possibilities. Where there is life and health, there is always hope, options on what to do and where to go. Still in life there are often questions about purpose, next steps, what to do now. For those who seem to have all the answers, there can still be uncertainty or doubt, lies that are self-told or regrets. Even those who have a great deal of money and material things still have questions about life. God has given us life; even when life is difficult, we can seek assistance from Him, family, friends, professionals, even strangers-never consider suicide; it is not the answer to our problems.



© Can Stock Photo

What is Suicide?

The National Institute of Mental Health defines suicide as the following: “when people direct violence at themselves with the intent to end their lives, and they die because of their actions

(<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/suicide-faq/index.shtml#pub1>).

It is a Public Health Problem

Unfortunately, those who are famous, and those who are not as well- known are committing suicide at alarming rates. It is growing to be a public health problem in 2019. According to the National Institute of Mental Health, over 40,000 people die by suicide each year in the United States; it is the [10th leading cause of death](#) overall

(<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/suicide-prevention/index.shtml>).

In fact, research has found that suicide, along with drug overdose, is now contributing to a decrease in the overall life expectancy in this country.

Life Expectancy in the United States is Lower Due to Growing Number of Suicides

According to reports,

“over the past decades, suicide has ranked as the 10th leading cause of death in the United States, a [third new final government report](#) reveals. Though constant, the rate has increased over time from about 10 suicides per 100,000 in 1999 to 14 per 100,000 in 2017. And female suicides increased at a higher rate than male suicides during this period, though more men than women die by suicide each year.”

The rate of suicide [rose in 44 states](#) between 1999 and 2016, with half of states reporting an increase of greater than 30 percent. Many suicide prevention programs focus on helping [teenagers](#).

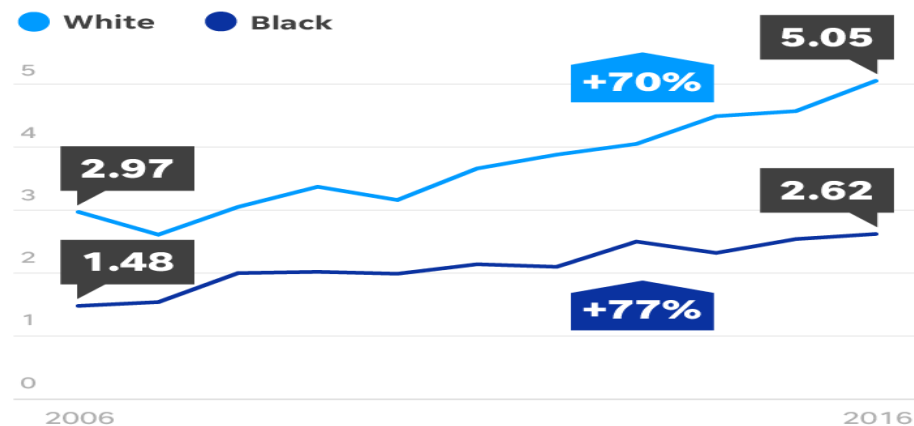
Suicide Does Not Discriminate.

People of all genders, ages, and ethnicities can be at risk for suicide. Many, many more people who are youth and children are committing and attempting to commit suicide.

The suicide rate for white children and teens between 10 and 17 was up 70%. According to the USA Today, findings have shown that between 2006 and 2016, the latest data analysis available from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, that more and more youth are taking their own lives. Surprisingly, African Americans are dying at higher rates. Although black children and teens kill themselves less often than white youth do, the rate of increase was higher — 77% (<https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2018/03/19/teen-suicide-soaring-do-spotty-mental-health-and-addiction-treatment-share-blame/428148002/>).

Teen suicide is soaring. The biggest rate increase was among black youth

Suicides per 100,000 10-to-17 year-olds from 2006 to 2016:



SOURCE Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
Karl Gelles/USA TODAY

Risk Factors

There is no one reason why people commit suicide. Researchers feel that there are similar risk factors in those attempting to, or committing the act, such as the following:

- Talking about wanting to die or wanting to kill themselves
- Talking about feeling empty, hopeless, or having no reason to live
- Making a plan or looking for a way to kill themselves, such as searching online, stockpiling pills, or buying a gun
- Talking about great guilt or shame

- Talking about feeling trapped or feeling that there are no solutions
- Feeling unbearable pain (emotional pain or physical pain)
- Talking about being a burden to others
- Using alcohol or drugs more often
- Acting anxious or agitated
- Withdrawing from family and friends
- Changing eating and/or sleeping habits
- Showing rage or talking about seeking revenge
- Taking great risks that could lead to death, such as driving extremely fast
- Talking or thinking about death often
- Displaying extreme mood swings, suddenly changing from very sad to very calm or happy
- Giving away important possessions
- Saying goodbye to friends and family
- Putting affairs in order, making a will

What Happens Next?

One thing that is clear is that families and loved ones are very sad, stunned and upset when they learn about their death of a loved one.



Get Help

If you or someone you know has these risk factors, get help as soon as possible, particularly if the behavior is new or has increased recently. Help can come in the form of counseling, or getting involved in group work. One resource is the [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#), **1-800-273-TALK (8255)**. The Lifeline is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The deaf and hard of hearing can contact the Lifeline via TTY at 1-800-799-4889.

Suicide is complicated and tragic but knowing the warning signs for suicide and how to get help can help save lives.