

TriHealth EAP

Perspectives on Suicide Prevention & Awareness

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC,) suicide rates have increased by 30% since 1999. Each year, more than 41,000 individuals die by suicide, leaving behind their family and friends to grieve the tragedy and loss. Friends and families affected by a suicide loss (often called "suicide loss survivors") are left in the dark questioning. Too often the feelings of shame and stigma prevent them from talking openly.



The truth is that we all can benefit from honest conversations about mental health conditions and suicide, because just one conversation can change a life.

What are some potential warning signs?

- The person talks about feeling hopeless or trapped, being in pain, or having suicidal thoughts.
- The person exhibits changes in behavior such as isolating themselves, increasing alcohol or drug use, calling or visiting friends and family to say goodbye, giving away possessions, and looking for ways to end their life.
- The person is depressed, anxious, or angry/agitated for a prolonged time, or seems to suddenly "get better."

What are possible risk factors?

- Mental health diagnosis
- Substance use disorder
- Traumatic brain injury
- Serious physical health issues, including chronic pain
- Significant life events
- A friend or family member has completed suicide
- Childhood abuse or trauma
- History of suicide attempts

What can I do to help?

It is important to remember that someone can have all of the risk factors and still never consider suicide. However, if someone is struggling, there are things you can do to help. The first step is to talk with them. You might be afraid to ask about suicidal thoughts because you think it would make them act on those thoughts. The reality is that asking about suicidal thoughts is being supportive. You can acknowledge the person's pain and help them get needed assistance. Don't try to minimize the problems, or shame the person into changing their mind.

What if you are having thoughts of suicide?

Talk to someone. Tell someone what you are thinking. Make an appointment with your doctor or a counselor. Call or text a hotline. You don't have to walk this journey alone! There is hope and help available.



Where can I find help? (These resources are accessible 24/7)

- Call 911 if the person is in immediate danger.
- National Suicide Hotline: 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
- Greater Cincinnati Hotline: 513-281-CARE (2273)
- Crisis Textline: Text "HOME" to 741 741
- TriHealth EAP: 513-891-1627 or 800 642 9794

Coping with Loss from a Suicide



Death is difficult, and when there are extenuating circumstances like a sudden death or death by suicide, it can complicate grieving even more. In addition to the typical feelings of loss and sadness, there also can be shock, anger and guilt. It is common to relive the last moments and last communication with a loved one, searching for something you could have done to change the outcome.

Suicide is a result of emotional pain, whether it is known or unknown to the person's family, friends and coworkers. Sometimes the person has a mental health or substance abuse diagnosis, but sometimes not. Either way, no one ever can be fully prepared for an unexpected loss.

It is very important after a loss that you take care of yourself. Some ways to care for yourself are to be patient and kind with how you talk to yourself, get plenty of rest, say no to requests that are not critical, spend time with people who help you feel good, and spend time alone if you need it. You can try attending a support group, or talking with an individual counselor to help process your feelings. Listen to what you need, and find a way to get those needs met.

Things to remember

- You will survive; you may not think so, but you will.
- Allow yourself to struggle with "why" it happened until you no longer need to know "why," or until you are satisfied with partial answers.
- You may feel overwhelmed by the intensity of your feelings, but know that all your feelings are normal.
- Don't be afraid to cry. Tears are healing.
- Utilize support groups, such as Compassionate Friends or Survivors of Suicide.
- Know that you will never be the same again, but you can heal and even go beyond just surviving.

Where can I find help as a survivor?

- American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (www.afsp.org)
- Surviving After Suicide (SAS) support groups
- Suicide Awareness Voices of Education (www.save.org)
- www.suicide.org/support-groups