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## Words Matter

<b>Discouraged</b>	→	<b>Preferred</b>
considering, contemplating, thinking about suicide	→	have thoughts of suicide
unsuccessful or failed attempt	→	attempted suicide
successful or completed suicide, committed suicide, killed oneself	→	died of suicide, took one's own life
suicide threat, suicide gesture	→	suicidal behavior
<p>making jokes about suicide using suicidal statements to express frustration, despair, anger</p>		

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## Your Role be a supportive person

### You are expected to:

- provide support and validation, or refer to someone who can
- provide resources and information, or refer to someone who can

### You are not expected to:

- make them feel better
- solve their problems
- stop them from attempting suicide

**Suicide is preventable, but it is not predictable.**  
**A suicide death is never your fault!**

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## Compassion

a feeling of deep sympathy and sorrow for another who is stricken by misfortune, accompanied by a strong desire to alleviate the suffering

"If help is harmful, then it's not help."  
-Kelechi Ubozoh

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10 Leading Causes of Death by Age Group, United States - 2018

Rank	Age Groups										Total
	<1	1-4	5-9	10-14	15-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	
1	Congenital Anomalies 4,473	Unintentional Injury 1,526	Unintentional Injury 734	Unintentional Injury 692	Unintentional Injury 12,044	Unintentional Injury 24,014	Unintentional Injury 22,667	Malignant Neoplasms 37,301	Malignant Neoplasms 113,947	Heart Disease 526,569	Heart Disease 655,381
2	Short Gestation 3,079	Congenital Anomalies 384	Malignant Neoplasms 393	Suicide 596	Suicide 6,211	Suicide 8,020	Malignant Neoplasms 10,640	Heart Disease 32,220	Heart Disease 81,042	Malignant Neoplasms 431,192	Malignant Neoplasms 599,274
3	Maternal Pregnancy Comp. 1,358	Homicide 353	Congenital Anomalies 291	Malignant Neoplasms 450	Homicide 1,607	Homicide 5,234	Heart Disease 19,332	Unintentional Injury 22,030	Unintentional Injury 22,603	Chronic Low Respiratory Disease 135,560	Unintentional Injury 161,127
4	SIDS 1,334	Malignant Neoplasms 326	Homicide 171	Congenital Anomalies 172	Malignant Neoplasms 1,371	Malignant Neoplasms 3,884	Suicide 7,321	Suicide 8,343	Chronic Low Respiratory Disease 18,804	Cerebrovascular Disease 127,244	Chronic Low Respiratory Disease 150,485
5	Unintentional Injury 1,105	Influenza & Pneumonia 122	Influenza & Pneumonia 71	Homicide 108	Heart Disease 900	Heart Disease 2,561	Homicide 3,301	Liver Disease 8,157	Diabetes Mellitus 14,941	Alzheimer's Disease 129,658	Cerebrovascular Disease 141,819
6	Pneumonia 724	Heart Disease 115	Chronic Low Respiratory Disease 08	Heart Disease 101	Congenital Anomalies 354	User Disease 1,908	User Disease 3,108	Diabetes Mellitus 6,114	User Disease 13,945	Diabetes Mellitus 90,182	Alzheimer's Disease 122,019
7	Bacterial Sepsis 579	Postnatal Period 62	Heart Disease 08	Chronic Low Respiratory Disease 61	Diabetes Mellitus 246	Diabetes Mellitus 837	Diabetes Mellitus 2,282	Cerebrovascular Disease 5,128	Cerebrovascular Disease 12,789	Unintentional Injury 97,253	Diabetes Mellitus 84,940
8	Circulatory System Disease 428	Septicemia 54	Cerebrovascular Disease 54	Influenza & Pneumonia 54	Influenza & Pneumonia 200	Cerebrovascular Disease 567	Cerebrovascular Disease 1,704	Chronic Low Respiratory Disease 3,807	Stroke 8,540	Influenza & Pneumonia 48,888	Influenza & Pneumonia 59,120
9	Respiratory Disease 390	Chronic Low Respiratory Disease 50	Septicemia 54	Influenza & Pneumonia 51	Chronic Low Respiratory Disease 165	HIV 482	Influenza & Pneumonia 956	Septicemia 2,390	Septicemia 5,956	Nephritis 42,232	Nephritis 51,390
10	Neonatal Injuries 375	Cerebrovascular Disease 43	Benign Neoplasms 19	Benign Neoplasms 30	Complicated Pregnancy 151	Influenza & Pneumonia 457	Septicemia 829	Influenza & Pneumonia 2,320	Influenza & Pneumonia 5,858	Parkinson's Disease 37,888	Suicide 68,244

10<sup>th</sup> leading cause of death in the US

2<sup>nd</sup> leading cause of death for ages 10-34

Over 48,000 deaths in 2018

2x as many suicide deaths as homicide deaths

www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/suicide

Data Source: National Vital Statistics System, National Center for Health Statistics, CDC. Produced by: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, CDC using WISQARS™.



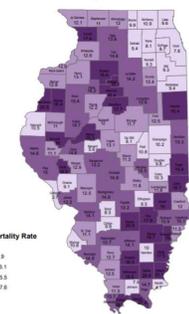
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## Suicide in Illinois

based on 2015-2017 CDC Data

All Ages Suicide Mortality Rate by County, Illinois, 2006-2017

- 1488 total deaths
- 132 deaths of youth age 10-19
- 47,000 youth report attempting suicide
- For every death, there are an estimated 25-200 attempts.
- Rate in rural counties 2x rate in Chicago area



Data Source: Illinois Department of Public Health, Center for Health Statistics, Vital Records, 2006-2017. Age-adjusted rate per 100,000 using the U.S. 2000 standard population. Created: June 2019.



**Champaign County (2006-2015): 199 suicides**

www.dph.illinois.gov/topics-services/prevention-wellness/suicide-prevention

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## Hotlines

- Who should contact
- When to contact
- How to contact
- What happens next
- Considerations

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## Biological: Brain Function

46% of people who died by suicide had a diagnosed mental illness  
\*This does not mean that mental illness caused their suicide

- Mood disorders (Depression, Bipolar Disorder)
- Anxiety disorders
- Trauma & Stress disorders (PTSD)
- Eating disorders
- Substance Use disorders
- Psychotic disorders (Schizophrenia)
- Neurodevelopmental disorders (Autism, ADHD, Conduct Disorder)

➤ Symptoms of mental illness are similar to symptoms of trauma  
➤ Neurobiology of trauma- something else leads to both

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## Social: Crisis

- Not the event, but the person's reaction to the event
- Happens when stress or emotions exceed their ability to cope
- Can develop from a single stressful incident or repeated exposure to stress
- Suicidal thoughts can happen any time someone is in crisis, even in the absence of mental illness

Age Group	% of suicides
<18 yrs	35%
18-24	24%
25-34	23%
35-64	16%
65+	6%

FIGURE 3. % of suicides occurring within 24 hours of a crisis, by age group

www.sprc.org/sites/default/files/migrate/library/YouthSuicideFactSheet.pdf

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## Psychological: Inner Conflict

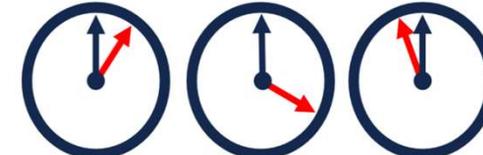


- Thoughts, feelings, and beliefs about ourselves and our place in the world
- ability to perform roles
- ability to meet expectations
- moral dilemmas (moral injury)
- shame, guilt, humiliation
- May include cognitive distortions - perceptions don't always match reality
- ❖ **Thwarted belongingness**
- ❖ **Perceived burdensomeness**
- ❖ **Strain**

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## Impulsivity

### Time from Decision to Suicide Attempt



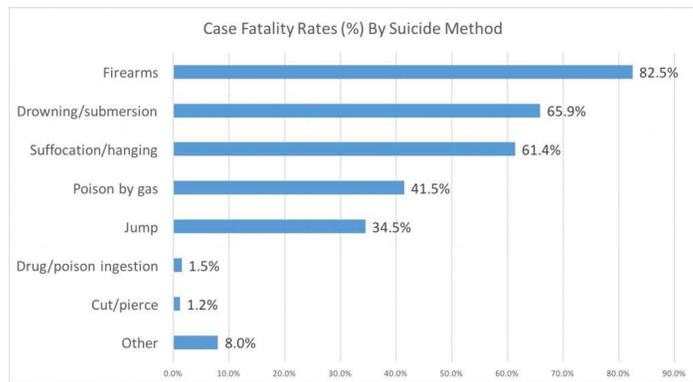
Less than 5 min. **24%**  
 Less than 20 min. **48%**  
 Within 1 hr. **71%**

Percent of Suicide Attempters

Simon, T.R., Swann, A.C., Powell, K.E., Potter, L.B., Kresnow, M., and O'Carroll, P.W. Characteristics of Impulsive Suicide Attempts and Attempters. SLTB. 2001; 32(supp):49-59.

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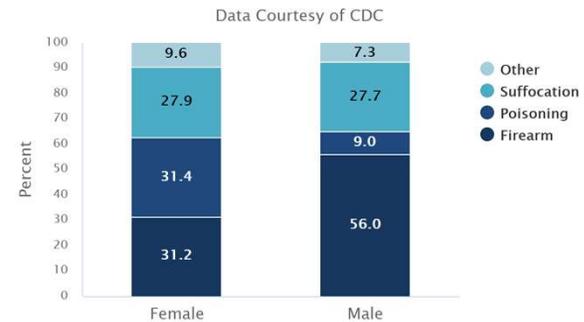
## Means Matter



[www.hsph.harvard.edu/means-matter/means-matter/case-fatality](http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/means-matter/means-matter/case-fatality)

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### Percentage of Suicide Deaths by Method in the United States (2017)

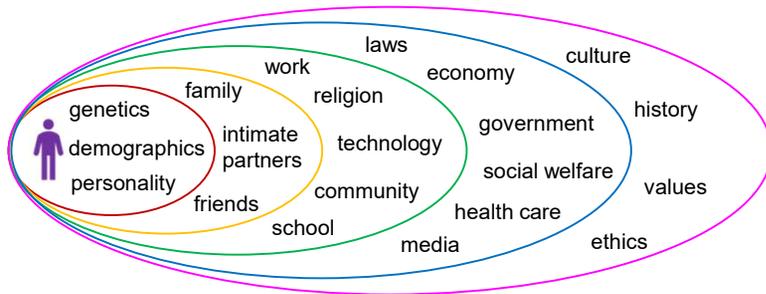


- About 51% of suicides in 10-24 year-olds are by firearm
- 82% of these guns belonged to a family member, usually a parent
- 2/3 of them were stored unlocked

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## Suicide is Complex

There is no single cause for suicide!



## Risk Factors

- stress, crisis, trauma:
  - discrimination/oppression, relationship issues, academic stress, job loss, financial difficulties, legal trouble, disasters
- mental illness & substance use
- military service
- LGBTQ+
- job stress
- family separation
- incarceration
- sexual assault and abuse
- domestic/intimate partner violence (victim, witness, perpetrator)
- bullying (victim and perpetrator)
- chronic health problems
- experience with death or suicide
- personal and cultural characteristics (e.g. impulsiveness, perfectionism)

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## Protective Factors

- coping skills
- problem-solving skills
- connectedness, belongingness
- social support
- acceptance, affirmation
- sense of purpose
- feelings of success
- community services and supports
- organizational safety and wellness
- economic stability and social welfare
- public policy
- cultural beliefs

## Warning Signs

- We're not good at recognizing these!
- Identify circumstances and situations that can increase risk rather than trying to identify individuals at risk
- You don't have to wait for warning signs to ask about suicide

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## Warning Signs

### Indirect Warning Signs

- Crisis - overwhelming emotional distress
- Feeling empty, hopeless, or worthless
- Feeling trapped or having no solutions to problems
- Withdrawing or from family, friends, or activities
- Changes in eating or sleeping habits
- Engaging in risky and dangerous behaviors
- Overreacting or underreacting
- Guilt or shame
- Anxiety, agitation, or irritability
- Anger or rage
- Extreme mood swings
- Loss of future thought
- Increased alcohol or drug use

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## Warning Signs

### Direct Warning Signs

- Talking about having no reason to live
- Talking about being a burden or that others would be better off without them
- Talking about death or wanting to die
- Making jokes about suicide
- Giving away important possessions
- Saying goodbye to family and friends
- Making a will or getting affairs in order, including arranging for care of family members or pets
- Making a plan for suicide or preparing means, such as acquiring a firearm or stockpiling pills

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## Warning Signs

### Verbal

I can't take it anymore.	Nobody cares about me.
I'm just done.	No one understands.
My life is over.	No one will miss me.
I don't want to live like this.	No one needs me.
Nothing matters anymore.	They'd be better off without me.
What difference does it make?	My family shouldn't have deal with this.
I can't do anything right.	I just want to end it all.
I'm a failure.	I wish I was never born.
I'm just no good.	I want to sleep and not wake up.

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## Active Listening Skills

- Listen more than you talk
- Be genuine
- Be conversational
- Be aware of non-verbal communication
- Be compassionate
- Be empathetic and give unconditional positive regard
- Be comfortable with silence
- Respect culture, identity, and experiences

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## Active Listening Techniques

- **Reflecting, Clarifying, Paraphrasing**
  - It seems like you're saying/feeling...
  - What I'm hearing is...
  - So what you're saying is...
- **Open-ended questions, Statement questions**
  - I wonder if you've thought about...
  - Can you tell me more about...?
- **Validating**
  - I understand that you feel...
  - I can tell that \_\_\_ is important to you.
  - You have the right to feel...
- **Pauses, silence**

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## How To Ask

### Create a Safe Space

- Ask in private
- Explain your concerns
- Normalize suicide to reduce shame
- Be direct – use the word suicide
- Don't suggest a "no" answer
- Ask twice before accepting a denial
- Reassure that you are asking because you care

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## How To Ask

I understand that things are really hard right now. It seems like you really miss school and being with your friends. I've noticed that you've been crying and seem to be on edge. **Signs & Concerns**

Others have said that sometimes when they get really stressed or upset they think about suicide. Is this something that you have thought about? **Normalize**

Sometimes these thoughts can just pop into your head and go away quickly. Has that ever happened? **Say "Suicide"**

**Ask Twice**

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## How To Ask

I can tell that this break-up is really hard on you. I've noticed that you seem sad and withdrawn. With all that you've gone through, it's understandable that you may have trouble dealing with everything and might have thoughts of suicide. Have you been feeling this way? **Signs & Concerns**

These thoughts can be scary, but they happen to people sometimes. Have you ever thought that you just don't want to live anymore? **Normalize**

**Say "Suicide"**

**Ask Twice**

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## How To Ask

Sometimes when people feel really hurt and overwhelmed, they may not be able to see ways that things can get better.

When you say that you are done with it all, do you mean that you are thinking about suicide?

It's not unusual for people to wish that they were dead or think others would be better off if they were dead. Have you ever thought that?

Signs & Concerns

Normalize

Say "Suicide"

Ask Twice

## What Not To Say

### Don't silence them:

- Don't say that! That's a terrible thing to say.

### Don't deny their feelings:

- You don't really want to die.
- You don't mean it.

### Don't shame them:

- I can't believe you would even consider this.

### Don't refer to suicide in negative terms:

- You're not going to do something stupid, are you?
- How can you consider such terrible choice?

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## What Not To Say

### Don't make it about you:

- I'm really worried about you.
- I know exactly how you feel.

### Don't push positivity:

- Just try to think happy thoughts.
- Stop being so negative.

### Don't promise that things will get better:

- You'll feel better tomorrow.
- Everything's going to be ok.

## What Not To Say

### Don't give praise or admiration:

- You have so much to live for.
- You're such a great person.
- You have so many people who love you.

### Don't leverage relationships:

- How can you do that to your family?
- Think about how your family would feel.
- Your friends would be devastated.

### Don't make them promise not to attempt:

- Promise me you won't do this.

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## What Not To Say

### Don't minimize or trivialize problems:

- It's not really that bad.
- It's just a {test, game, fight...}.
- None of this will matter later.
- You're just mad. You'll get over it.

### Don't judge or make character assessments:

- You're so selfish.
- You're such a coward.
- You're so brave and strong.
- You're doing the right thing by asking for help.

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## What Not To Say

### Don't argue or try to talk them out of it:

- Don't do this. You know this won't solve your problems.
- Do you really think this is going to fix things?

### Don't give advice:

- You need to eat better and get more exercise.
- You should see about getting medication.

### Don't problem solve until you have validated:

- A tutor would be able to help with your grades.
- Just break up and move on. He's not worth it.

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## What Not To Say

### Don't use clichés:

- Suicide is a permanent solution to a temporary problem.
- Suicidal people don't want to die, they just want the pain to end.
- Suicide doesn't end the pain; it just passes it on to someone else.

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## What To Say

### Maintain a safe space:

- I'm glad you feel safe talking to me.
- Thank you for trusting me.

### Sympathize:

- I'm sorry you're hurting.
- I'm sorry this is happening to you.

### Encourage sharing (but don't ask why):

- Can you tell me about what's making you feel that way?
- Can you tell me more about that?

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## What To Say

### Validate feelings:

- It's ok if you're not ok.
- It's understandable that you feel...
- You have the right to feel...

### Ask about suicidality:

- Plan - Have you thought about how you might do it?
- Intent - Do you intend to act on this plan?
- Means - Do you have {a gun, pills, etc.}?

## What To Say

### Offer support:

- You are not alone. I'm here for you.
- I care about you and I want to help.

### Empower to meet needs:

- What can I do to support you?
- What do you need from me right now?

### Encourage healthy coping & remind of strengths:

- When you've felt like this before, what has helped?
- You can get through this.

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## What To Say

### Encourage future-thought:

- What do you care about that is worth living for?
- What keeps you alive?

### Encourage help-seeking:

- Other people will know more about what to do.  
We can find someone who can help.

### Offer your presence (if you can):

- I'll go with you and we'll do it together.
- I'll sit with you while you call the hotline

## Goals for the Conversation

- Give space to talk about problems
- Provide emotional support and validation
- Shift their focus to the future and reasons for living
- Plan next steps toward safety

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