

# Understanding Suicide

Although anyone could contemplate or attempt suicide, certain factors put some people at higher risk. Mental health conditions top the list with an estimated 90% of suicide victims having a potentially treatable mental health condition (although all may not have been diagnosed or treated) including:

- Depression—it's estimated 2 out of 3 victims of suicide had depression
- Anxiety disorder
- Bipolar disorder
- Schizophrenia
- Substance use disorder

Other risk factors include:

- Serious or chronic health condition and/or pain
- Previous suicide attempt
- Family history of suicide
- Family history of mental illness
- Childhood abuse
- Stressful life events such as a death, divorce or job loss
- Prolonged exposure to stress factors such as harassment, bullying, relationship difficulties and unemployment

It's important to remember these factors do not cause suicide, only heighten the risk.

Suicide has been on the rise in recent years and is now the 10th leading cause of death in the United States. More troubling, suicide is currently the 2nd leading cause of death for teens and young adults, and an estimated one million suicide attempts are made each year in our country.

In the recent past, suicide—like cancer—was not talked about. However we now know that conversation leads to better awareness, dispelling the myths around suicide and greatly increasing the chances of preventing suicide.



## Warning Signs

We now know that most people who end their lives exhibit warning signs through their behavior or what they say. Most will show at least one or two signs, but could exhibit more.

Talking or writing about:

- Wanting to die
- Killing themselves
- Feeling hopeless or trapped
- Having no reason to live
- Being in unbearable pain
- Fearing they are a burden to others

New or changes in behavior:

- Searching for a way to end their life, such as stocking pills, looking to buy a gun, etc.
- Increased use of alcohol or drugs
- Giving away prized possessions
- Visiting or posting goodbyes
- Sleeping too little or too much
- Isolating from friends and family
- Withdrawing from activities
- Acting recklessly or aggressively



## Talking to Someone about Suicide

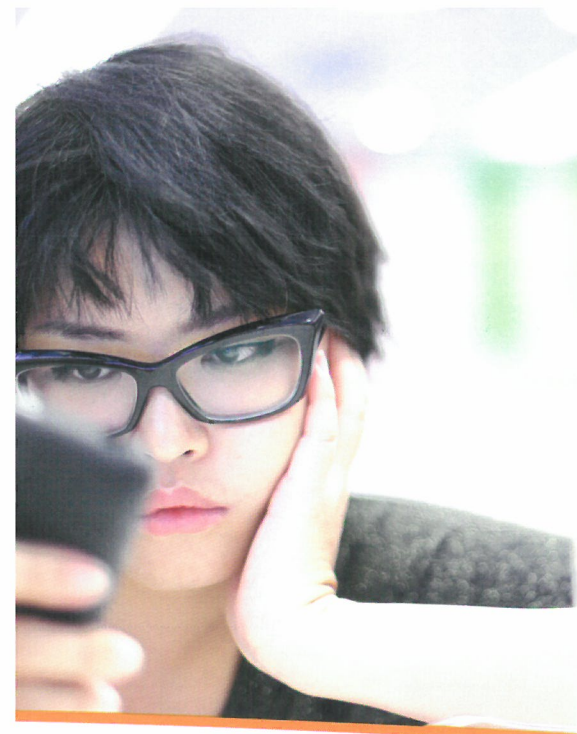
Suspecting or learning a friend or loved one is contemplating suicide can be overwhelming and frightening. However, talking to them is the first step in preventing suicide. Some talking tips include:

- Don't wait for them to bring up the topic
- Ask direct questions in a sensitive way
- Show genuine concern
- Don't be judgmental
- Never act shocked by what they might express to you

Let them know you understand it may seem there is no other way out of their pain, but that suicide is never the answer, treatment does exist and you will support them in seeking the help they need.

Ask if they have thought about how they would carry out a suicide. If they are able to give you a specific plan, DON'T leave them alone and do whatever you can to remove items like firearms, pills or other drugs, razor blades, extension cords— anything they could use to seriously hurt or kill themselves. If you can, take them to a doctor, mental health professional, hospital ER or call 911.

For immediate help, you can also call Pine Rest at **800.678.5500** or the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at **800.273.TALK**.



# How we can help

Our psychiatric hospital provides a safe environment for persons at risk or who have attempted or are threatening suicide. Our highly trained and compassionate staff includes psychiatrists, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, psychologists, social workers, chaplains and more. Crisis stabilization is the goal for those entering the program, followed by the development of an individualized aftercare plan.

Once the crisis has passed, we offer continuing support to help address the issues that led to suicidal thoughts or attempts. These include short-term intensive daily treatment on our campus as well as outpatient counseling, individual therapy and group therapy.

**If You Have Lost Someone to Suicide**  
Grieving the loss of someone who has lost their life to suicide is a difficult and complicated process fraught with feelings of sadness, guilt, anger and frustration. We provide professional grief counseling to help you work through your grief and loss and can also connect you to a support group where survivors of suicide benefit from sharing their experiences with others.

**Suicidal Posts on Social Media**  
With social media an increasing part of our everyday lives, you may occasionally see posts online from someone expressing thoughts of suicide—even someone you don't know.  
The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline has compiled a contact list of Safety Teams at Facebook, eBook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube and YouTube to help you anonymously report users: [www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/help-one-else](http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/help-one-else). Other social media sites may offer similar reporting features. The best way to find them is to use the social media site's search feature and search for the terms "suicide" or "self-harm."

## Contact Information

If you or your loved one are in crisis, please call our hospital's contact center, which is staffed 24/7 by licensed clinicians.

- 616.455.9200**
- 800.678.5500**
- 616.281.6446 (TTY line)**

We have outpatient locations throughout Michigan and Iowa and also offer counseling and therapy via online video connection. For more information or to schedule an appointment, call **866.852.4001**.

# UNDERSTANDING Suicide



For more information about mental health topics, please visit: [pinerest.org/insights](http://pinerest.org/insights)

**By knowing the warning signs you can help prevent a suicide**

