

Suicide

Key contact information

National Suicide Prevention Hotline: **988**

Humana Healthy Horizons® in Louisiana 24-Hour
Behavioral Health Crisis Line: **1-844-461-2848**

Key terms

Suicide: Death caused by self-directed injurious behavior with intent to die as a result of the behavior.

Suicide attempt: Non-fatal, self-directed, potentially injurious behavior with intent to die as a result of the behavior. A suicide attempt might not result in injury.

Suicidal ideation: Refers to thinking about, considering or planning suicide.

Facts

- Up to 45% of individuals who die by suicide have visited their primary care physician within a month of their death.
- Up to 67% of those who attempt suicide receive medical attention as a result of their attempt.

Risk factors

More than 90% of all people who attempt suicide present with depression and/or other mental disorders or a substance use disorder often in combination with other mental disorders.

Other risk factors include:

- Exposure to the suicidal behaviors of others, such as family members, peers or media figures
- Family history of mental disorders or substance use disorders
- Family history of suicide
- Family violence, including physical or sexual abuse
- Firearms in the home, as firearms are used in more than half of all suicides
- Incarceration
- Prior suicide attempt

Although these all could be risk factors, suicide and/or suicidal behavior **are not normal responses to stress**. Many people who experience high stress do not attempt suicide.

Suicide risk also is associated with changes in brain chemicals called neurotransmitters, including serotonin. Decreased serotonin levels have been linked to depression and a history of suicide attempts.

Humana Healthy Horizons® in Ohio

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Risk factors for nonfatal suicide attempts

Risk factors for nonfatal attempts by adults include:

- Alcohol and other substance use
- Depression and other mental disorders
- Separation or divorce

Risk factors for attempted suicide by youth include:

- Alcohol and other substance use
- Depression and other mental disorders
- Disruptive behaviors
- Physical or sexual abuse

Did you know?

- 12 to 25 suicide attempts occur per every suicide death.
- Men and the elderly are more likely to have fatal attempts than women and youths.
- Most suicide attempts are expressions of extreme distress, not harmless bids for attention.
- **A person who appears suicidal:**
 - Should not be left alone
 - Needs immediate mental health treatment

Warning signs

A person at acute risk of suicidal behavior will often show warning signs, including, but not limited to:

- Anxiety, agitation, trouble sleeping or sleeping all the time
- Dramatic mood changes
- Hopelessness
- Increased alcohol or drug use
- Rage, uncontrolled anger or revenge-seeking behavior
- Talking or writing about death, dying or suicide when these actions are out of the ordinary
- Threatening to hurt or kill themselves, or talking of wanting to hurt or kill themselves

Treatment guidelines

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration →

Psychiatry Online →

References

National Institutes of Mental Health, “Suicide,” accessed Nov. 21, 2022, <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/statistics/suicide.shtml>.

National Council for Mental Wellbeing, “Mental Health,” accessed Nov. 21, 2022, <https://www.thenationalcouncil.org/our-work/focus-areas/public-health/mental-health>.