

# Suicide Prevention and Awareness



# Suicide Prevention and Awareness



## Suicide in the United States:

- **More than 45,000 deaths from suicides per year among the general U.S. population**
- **Suicide is the 10<sup>th</sup> leading cause of death in the U.S.**
- **Every 12 minutes a life is lost to suicide**

SOURCE: CDC's National Vital Statistics System; CDC Vital Signs, June 2018  
<https://www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/suicide/index.html>

# Suicide Prevention and Awareness

## Suicide in the United States:

- It is estimated that close to one million people make a suicide attempt each year
- One attempt every 35 seconds
- Gender disparities
  - Women attempt suicide 3 times more often than men
  - Men die by suicide 4 times more often than women



# Suicide Prevention and Awareness

## Myths vs Realities

- **Individuals who have survived serious suicide attempts have clearly stated that they wished someone had shown an interest**
- **By supporting the person to get help, you've gone a long way toward saving a life**
- **Making a means of suicide less convenient can help save lives**



# Suicide Prevention and Awareness

## Myths vs Realities

- **Asking about suicide may lead to someone taking his or her life**



# Suicide Prevention and Awareness

## Myths vs Realities

- **Asking about suicide does not create suicidal thoughts than asking about chest pain causes angina**
- **The act of asking the question simply gives the individual permission to talk about his or her thoughts and feelings**



# Suicide Prevention and Awareness

## Myths vs Realities

- There are talkers and then there are doers



# Suicide Prevention and Awareness

## Myths vs Realities



- **Many individuals who die or attempt suicide have given some clue or warning. Someone who talks about suicide provides others with an opportunity to intervene before suicidal behaviors occur**
- **Suicide threats should never be ignored. No matter how causally or jokingly said statements like, “You’ll be sorry when I’m dead,” or “I can’t see my way out” may indicate serious suicidal feelings.**



# Suicide Prevention and Awareness

## Myths vs Realities

He/she will not die of suicide because...

- He just made plans for a vacation
- She has young children at home
- He made a verbal or written promise
- She knows how dearly her family loves her



# Suicide Prevention and Awareness

## Myths vs Realities

**The intent to die can override rational thinking.**

- **Someone experiencing suicidal ideation or intent must be taken seriously and referred to a clinical provider who can further evaluate his or her condition and provide treatment as appropriate.**



# Suicide Prevention and Awareness



## S.A.V.E.

- S.A.V.E. will help you act with care and compassion if you encounter someone who is in suicide crisis.
- The acronym S.A.V.E. helps one to remember the important steps in suicide prevention
  - S** – Signs of suicidal thinking should be recognized
  - A** – Ask the most important question of all
  - V** – Validate the person's experience
  - E** – Encourage treatment, and expedite getting help

# Suicide Prevention and Awareness

## Importance of recognizing warning signs



- **There are behaviors that may indicate that individual needs help**
- **Someone in crisis may show behaviors that indicate a risk of harming or killing themselves**

# Suicide Prevention and Awareness

## **S.A.V.E.**

### **S – Signs of suicidal thinking**

**Learn to recognize these warning signs:**

- **Hopelessness, feeling like there is no way out**
- **Anxiety, Agitation, sleeplessness, or mood swings**
- **Feeling like there is no reason to live**
- **Rage or anger**
- **Engaging in risky activities without thinking**
- **Increase alcohol or drug use**
- **Withdrawing from family and friends**



# Suicide Prevention and Awareness

## **S.A.V.E.**

### **S – Signs of suicidal thinking**

**The presence of any of the following signs requires immediate attention:**

- **Thinking about hurting or killing themselves**
- **Looking for ways to die**
- **Talking about death, dying or suicide**
- **Self-destructive or risk taking behavior, especially when it involves alcohol, drugs, or weapons**



# Suicide Prevention and Awareness

## S.A.V.E.

**A** – Ask the most important question

Know how to ask the most important question of all...

**“Are you thinking about killing yourself?”**

Question not to ask...

**“Are you thinking about harming yourself?”**

- Be direct
- Open the conversation
- Be straightforward



# Suicide Prevention and Awareness

## **S.A.V.E.**

**A** – Ask the most important question

Know how to ask the most important question of all...  
differently:

**“Are you thinking about suicide?”**

**“Have you had thoughts about taking your life?”**

**“Are you thinking about killing yourself?”**





# Suicide Prevention and Awareness

## S.A.V.E.

### A – Ask the most important question



#### Do's

- Do ask the question when you recognize warning signs and symptoms.
- Do ask the question in a natural way that flows with the conversation

#### Don'ts

- Don't ask the question as if your looking for a "No" answer
  - "You aren't thinking of killing yourself, are you?"
- Don't wait to ask the question when someone is halfway out the door

# Suicide Prevention and Awareness

## **S.A.V.E.**

**A** – Ask the most important question

**Things to consider when talking with someone at risk of suicide:**

- Remain calm
- Listen more than you speak
- Maintain eye contact
- Act with confidence
- Do not argue
- Use open body language
- Limit questions – let the person do the talking
- Use supportive, encouraging comments
- Be honest – there are no quick solutions, but help is available

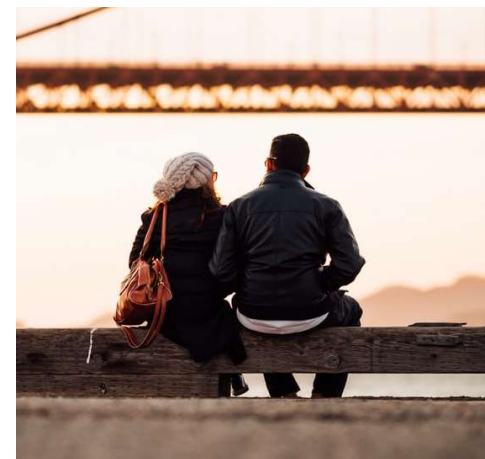


# Suicide Prevention and Awareness

## S.A.V.E.

### V – Validate the person's experience

- Talk openly about suicide, be willing to listen, and allow the person to express his or her feelings
- Recognize the situation is serious
- Do not pass judgement
- Reassure that help is available



# Suicide Prevention and Awareness

## S.A.V.E.

### **E** – Encourage treatment, and expedite getting help

- **What should I do if I think someone is suicidal?**
  - **Don't keep the person's suicidal behavior a secret**
  - **Do not leave him or her alone**
  - **Try to get the person to seek immediate help from his or her doctor or take them to the nearest hospital emergency room**
  - **Call 911**
- **Reassure the person help is available**
- **Call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-8255**



# Suicide Prevention and Awareness

## **S.A.V.E.**

**E** – Encourage treatment, and expedite getting help

### **Safety Issues:**

- **Never negotiate with someone who has a gun**
  - **Get to safety, call 911**
- **If the individual has taken pills, cut or harmed themselves in some way, call 911**
- **Call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-8255**



# Suicide Prevention and Awareness

## Summary



### Lessons learned:

- **Suicide prevention is everyone's business**
- **General facts about suicide in the United States**
- **How to identify someone who may be at risk**
- **How to address a crisis situation**
- **What resources are available and how to access them**

# Suicide Prevention and Awareness

