



Live Well, Work Well

Health and wellness tips for your work, home and life—brought to you by the insurance professionals at Lawley



MENTAL HEALTH: SUICIDE

Suicide is the 10th leading cause of death across all ages in the United States and the second leading cause of death for Americans between the ages of 10 and 34.

Suicide Facts

Thousands of people attempt or die from suicide every year. Mental disorders such as depression or a substance abuse disorder (usually in combination with a mental disorder) account for 90% of suicides. The National Institute of Mental Health has more information on depression at www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/depression/index.shtml.

Who Is at Risk?

People of all ages can attempt suicide, but some groups are at higher risk than others. Men are more likely than women to die from suicide, but women are more likely than men to attempt suicide.

Several factors can also contribute to the risk of committing suicide, such as:

- Previous suicide attempt(s)
- History of depression, an eating disorder or other mental illness
- Alcohol or drug abuse
- Family history of suicide, violence or abuse
- Physical illness
- Relational, social, work or financial loss

- Feelings of hopelessness
- Impulsive or aggressive tendencies
- Barriers to accessing mental health treatment
- Feeling alone

Warning Signs

When a person is thinking about suicide, he or she will likely display indications, which may include:

- Threats, talk or writing of suicide or hurting oneself
- Withdrawal from family and friends
- Sudden, excessive and/or uncontrolled rage
- Taking unnecessary risks or exhibiting self-destructive behavior
- Increased alcohol and/or drug use
- Dramatic mood swings

Not all suicides are planned; they may be impulsive after experiencing a traumatic event such as a breakup or unplanned pregnancy. However, in these cases, depression is usually present.

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Prevention

If someone you know is threatening suicide, it is important to start a conversation regarding his or her feelings. Most of the time, the person will talk willingly. Make sure to listen and express empathy. Do not leave him or her alone, and if he or she refuses professional help, see that a parent or trusted friend is informed.

If you are struggling with suicidal thoughts, talk about how you are feeling with someone you trust. Do not be ashamed to admit you need help. The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is always staffed and ready to listen at 1-800-273-TALK(8255).

Coping with Suicide

The grief associated with this act can be complex. Guilt and anger may accompany sadness if the person thinks it was possible to have prevented it. It is important to get help from a mental health professional or grief counselor, and some people find it helpful to join a support group or keep a journal.

For help and more information:

- American Institute of Suicidology
www.suicidology.org
- National Institute of Mental Health
www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/suicide-prevention/index.shtml
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/suicide/
- Department of Veterans Affairs
www.mentalhealth.va.gov/suicide_prevention/index.asp