

Suicide as a Public Health Emergency

Compiled by Dr. Niki Wood, Psy.D.

Even though September is "National Suicide Prevention Month," springtime sees the highest number of suicides and suicide attempts.

General Statistics (USA)

<p>Suicide is the 10th leading cause of death in the US for all ages. (CDC)</p> <p>Every day, approximately 123 Americans die by suicide. (CDC)</p> <p>There is one death by suicide in the US every 12 minutes. (CDC)</p> <p>Depression affects 20-25% of Americans ages 18+ in a given year. (CDC)</p> <p>Suicide takes the lives of over 44,965 Americans every year. (CDC)</p> <p>The highest suicide rates in the US are among Whites, American Indians and Alaska Natives.</p>	<p>Only half of all Americans experiencing an episode of major depression receive treatment. (NAMI)</p> <p>80% -90% of people that seek treatment for depression are treated successfully using therapy and/or medication. (TADS study)</p> <p>An estimated quarter million people each year become suicide survivors (AAS).</p> <p>There is one suicide for every estimated 25 suicide attempts. (CDC)</p> <p>There is one suicide for every estimated 4 suicide attempts in the elderly. (CDC)</p>
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Suicide Awareness Voices of Education (SAFE.org)

Why?

No one is sure, but here are some possible reasons:

- There seems to be an increase in manic behaviors in the spring- possibly triggered by the warmer weather?
- Springtime follows a long winter of isolation. People often hole up, watch Netflix, avoid human interaction, stop going out...Once springtime hits, though, the demands for social interaction increase. People begin to go out more, take walks, do fun springtime activities. While this can be wonderful, it can also cause some people to feel increased pressure and disappointment. When your social media feeds are full of other people doing fun things and you are stuck inside, your mood can head south.
- Increased allergies- not feeling well has been linked to increased depression.

What can I do to help?

Friends, co-workers, and, crucially, family members should be aware of and take seriously some of the following warning signs in their loved one and should seek help immediately. Sometimes, taken alone, these warning signs may seem like innocuous mood swings. Trust your instinct and speak to your loved one's therapist if you notice trends that are alarming.

- Verbal suicide threats such as, "You'd be better off without me." or "Maybe I won't be around"
- Expressions of hopelessness and helplessness
- Previous suicide attempts
- Daring or risk-taking behavior
- Personality changes
- Depression
- Giving away prized possessions
- Lack of interest in future plans

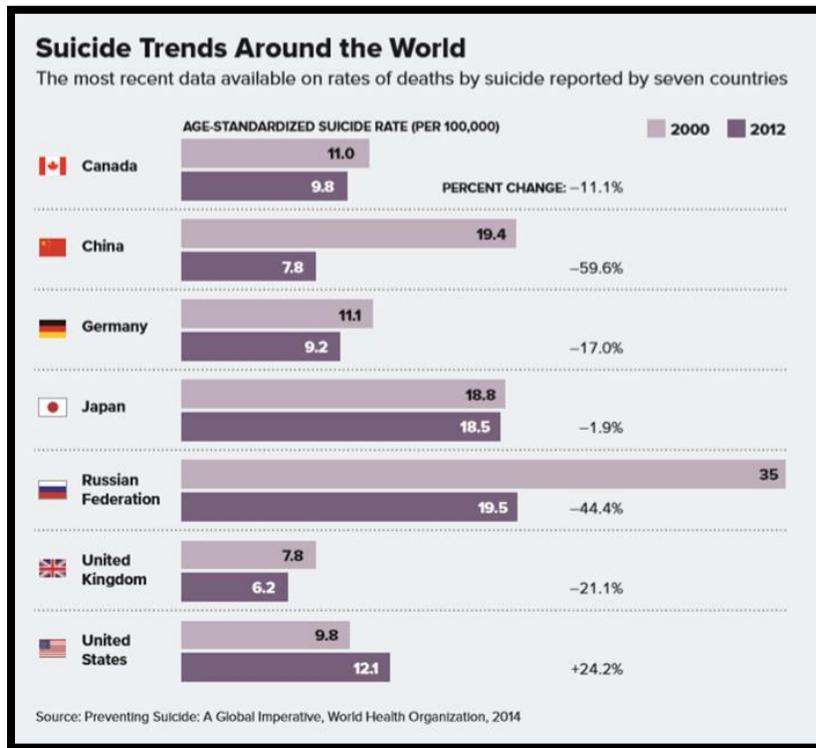
National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 800-273-8255



American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP.org)

Is this happening all over the world?

The US appears to be unique among developed nations with regard to the trend in suicide over the past 15+ years. The World Health Organization has identified suicide as a “global imperative” and has made recommendations for healthcare and education providers to recognize and address the warning signs of suicidality overall.



If you are feeling suicidal or are concerned about a loved one, please talk to someone. Talk to your therapist. Talk to your doctor. Talk to your teacher, school counselor, mom, dad, clergy, coach. Call 911 or go directly to your nearest emergency room. Reach out for help.

"...We shall remember not his death, but his daily victories gained through his kindness and thoughtfulness, through his love for his family and friends...for all things beautiful, lovely and honorable. We shall remember not his last day of defeat, but we shall remember the many days that he was victorious over overwhelming odds." (Taken from "Our Friend Died at His Own Battlefield," attributed to the Rev. Warren Stevens)