



# Every 40 seconds: Let's make suicide something we discuss – and prevent



In the time it takes to brush your teeth in the morning, a person has died by suicide. In the time it takes to fill a tea kettle or coffee pot, another has died. It's a startling statistic. Every 40 seconds throughout the world, someone's life ends this way.<sup>1</sup> For every person who dies, about 20 survive a suicide attempt.<sup>2</sup>

Suicide is a global health issue. But it's not often discussed openly. Silence, or even hushed tones, can add to the stigma. That can cause feelings of shame for people who have survived a suicide attempt or lost someone to suicide. Instead, it's important to show others that we care. We will listen without judgment and will help them get support when they need it.

Wondering what you should say or do if you're worried about someone? Want to show support in your community? Here are some ideas for getting started.

## Know the warning signs

When someone is considering taking their life by suicide, they might threaten to do it and search for methods and means. They might say things like, "No one will miss me when I'm gone." They might say goodbye to family and friends and give away things they care about.<sup>4</sup> You may also see extreme mood swings, increased anxiety, or increased anger or rage.<sup>5,6</sup>

### There are some risk factors to know as well:<sup>4</sup>

- Experiencing depression or a substance use disorder
- Having survived a previous suicide attempt
- Being socially isolated
- Suffering from ongoing illness or pain
- Having experienced abuse, trauma, war, violence or discrimination
- Experiencing severe distress like a breakup or loss of a loved one



Suicide is the **fourth-leading cause** of death for people ages 12–29.<sup>2</sup>

.....  
**1 in 100**

people die by suicide.<sup>3</sup>

**Know someone  
who's been more  
isolated lately?**

**Check in on them.**

Reaching out can make  
a big difference.

## Look for ways to help in your community

Consider volunteering at a suicide prevention organization. They might need people to answer phones. You might also be able to offer support in other ways such as spreading awareness at community events. Look for other organizations that may help at-risk people as well. Youth organizations, mentoring opportunities and recovery programs may be good places to contact.

## Be prepared for a tough conversation

If you think someone is considering suicide, ask them. Asking someone directly, "Have you thought about hurting or killing yourself?" will not put the idea into their head. It's important to talk and listen compassionately without judgment. Suicide is preventable.<sup>4,6</sup> Don't lecture them about the value of life, and don't tell them whether suicide is right or wrong.<sup>6</sup> Instead, listen. You can ask questions if needed, but be sure not to interrupt.<sup>6</sup>

With more awareness and efforts to prevent suicide, we won't have to lose a person every 40 seconds. Take a moment to consider what you could do to make positive change.

**Together, we can make a difference.**

## Get professional help

If the person asks you to keep it a secret, explain why it's important to get the care they need right away. While talking to you may be helpful for them, you don't have to do it all on your own. Encourage the person you're speaking with to seek professional support. They could talk with a doctor or mental health professional.<sup>4</sup> If you're worried they're in danger, don't leave them alone. Seek help from a crisis line or emergency services, and remove any methods that could be used to cause harm.<sup>4,6</sup>

## Call or text 988

988 is a quick way to access the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline. You can call or text anytime you or a loved one is experiencing a mental health crisis, including considering suicide. A crisis can look very different for everyone, so whatever feels like a mental health crisis to you is the right reason to call.



Scan this code to find more information about suicide prevention at [liveandworkwell.com](https://liveandworkwell.com). Use your company access code to get started.



1. World Health Organization (WHO). Suicide: One person dies every 40 seconds. [who.int/news/item/09-09-2019-suicide-one-person-dies-every-40-seconds](https://www.who.int/news/item/09-09-2019-suicide-one-person-dies-every-40-seconds). September 9, 2019. Accessed June 28, 2022.

2. WHO. Suicide prevention. [who.int/health-topics/suicide#tab=tab\\_1](https://www.who.int/health-topics/suicide#tab=tab_1). Accessed June 28, 2022.

3. WHO. One in 100 deaths is by suicide. [who.int/news/item/17-06-2021-one-in-100-deaths-is-by-suicide](https://www.who.int/news/item/17-06-2021-one-in-100-deaths-is-by-suicide). June 17, 2021. Accessed June 28, 2022.

4. WHO. Do you know someone who may be considering suicide? [cdn.who.int/media/docs/default-source/mental-health/depression/suicide-04-handouts-depression.pdf?sfvrsn=7c5eaac4\\_2](https://cdn.who.int/media/docs/default-source/mental-health/depression/suicide-04-handouts-depression.pdf?sfvrsn=7c5eaac4_2). Accessed June 28, 2022.

5. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. #BeThere to help prevent suicide. [cdc.gov/injury/features/be-there-prevent-suicide/index.html](https://www.cdc.gov/injury/features/be-there-prevent-suicide/index.html). Last reviewed February 24, 2022. Accessed June 28, 2022.

6. 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline. Help someone else. [suicidepreventionlifeline.org/help-someone-else/](https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/help-someone-else/). Accessed June 28, 2022.

**This program should not be used for emergency or urgent care needs. In an emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room.** This program is not a substitute for a doctor's or professional's care. Consult with your clinician for specific health care needs, treatment or medication. Due to the potential for a conflict of interest, legal consultation will not be provided on issues that may involve legal action against Optum or its affiliates, or any entity through which the caller is receiving these services directly or indirectly (e.g., employer or health plan). This program and its components may not be available in all states or for all group sizes and are subject to change. Coverage exclusions and limitations may apply.