

Suicide and suicidal thoughts

Suicide, taking your own life, is a tragic reaction to stressful life situations — and all the more tragic because suicide can be prevented. Whether you're considering suicide or know someone who feels suicidal, learn suicide warning signs and how to reach out for immediate help and professional treatment. You may save a life — your own or someone else's.

It may seem like there's no way to solve your problems and that suicide is the only way to end the pain. But you can take steps to stay safe — and start enjoying your life again.

Symptoms:

Suicide warning signs or suicidal thoughts include:

- Talking about suicide — for example, making statements such as "I'm going to kill myself," "I wish I were dead" or "I wish I hadn't been born"
- Getting the means to take your own life, such as buying a gun or stockpiling pills
- Withdrawing from social contact and wanting to be left alone
- Having mood swings, such as being emotionally high one day and deeply discouraged the next
- Being preoccupied with death, dying or violence
- Feeling trapped or hopeless about a situation
- Increasing use of alcohol or drugs
- Changing normal routine, including eating or sleeping patterns
- Doing risky or self-destructive things, such as using drugs or driving recklessly
- Giving away belongings or getting affairs in order when there's no other logical explanation for doing this
- Saying goodbye to people as if they won't be seen again
- Developing personality changes or being severely anxious or agitated, particularly when experiencing some of the warning signs listed above

- Warning signs aren't always obvious, and they may vary from person to person. Some people make their intentions clear, while others keep suicidal thoughts and feelings secret.

When to see a doctor:

If you're feeling suicidal, but you aren't immediately thinking of hurting yourself:

- Reach out to a close friend or loved one — even though it may be hard to talk about your feelings
- Contact a minister, spiritual leader or someone in your faith community
- Call a suicide hotline
- Make an appointment with your doctor, other health care provider or a mental health professional

Suicidal thinking doesn't get better on its own — so get help.

Causes

- Suicidal thoughts have many causes. Most often, suicidal thoughts are the result of feeling like you can't cope when you're faced with what seems to be an overwhelming life situation. If you don't have hope for the future, you may mistakenly think suicide is a solution. You may experience a sort of tunnel vision, where in the middle of a crisis you believe suicide is the only way out.
- There also may be a genetic link to suicide. People who complete suicide or who have suicidal thoughts or behavior are more likely to have a family history of suicide.

Risk factors

- Although attempted suicide is more frequent for women, men are more likely than women to complete suicide because they typically use more-lethal methods, such as a firearm.
- Attempted suicide before
- Feel hopeless, worthless, agitated, socially isolated or lonely
- Experience a stressful life event, such as the loss of a loved one, military service, a breakup, or financial or legal problems
- Have a substance abuse problem — alcohol and drug abuse can worsen thoughts of suicide and make you feel reckless or impulsive enough to act on your thoughts
- Have suicidal thoughts and have access to firearms in your home
- Have an underlying psychiatric disorder, such as major depression, post-traumatic stress disorder or bipolar disorder

If you need help call or text 988 or 800-273-TALK (800-273-8255) right away. When people call or text 988, they will be connected to trained counselors who are part of the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline network. An online chat choice is also available. This service is free and available 24/7.

Need help or more ideas? Call your EAP to find resources near you. We're here to help!

Call toll-free, **24 hours a day**, seven days a week.

TTY Users can call:

Visit our website:

REGISTRATION CODE:

We offer counseling sessions face-to-face or telehealth consultations.