



An Introduction to Suicide Prevention



**Suicide is a
health issue.**



**Suicide can
be prevented.**



Scope of the Problem



Research



Prevention



What You Can Do



**How we talk
about suicide
matters.**

HOW WE TALK

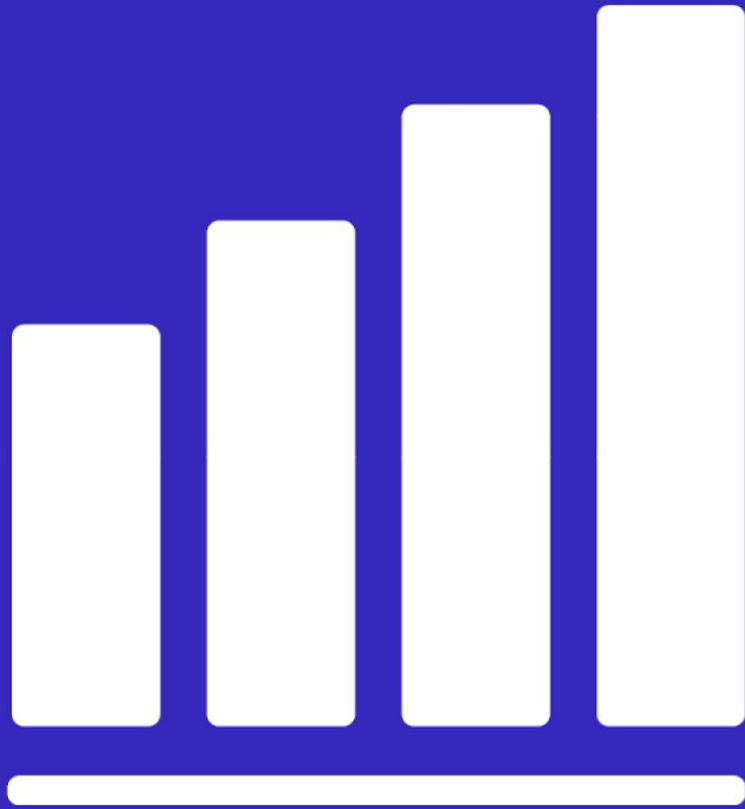
Language Do's and Don'ts

Avoid Saying

- x** "Committed suicide"
- x** "Failed" or "successful" attempt

Say

- ✓ "Died by suicide"
- ✓ "Ended their life"
- ✓ "Killed themselves"
- ✓ "Suicide attempt" or "death by suicide"



**Scope of
the Problem**

SCOPE OF THE PROBLEM



**Over 800,000
people die
by suicide
each year.**

SCOPE OF THE PROBLEM



**Someone dies
by suicide every
40 seconds.**

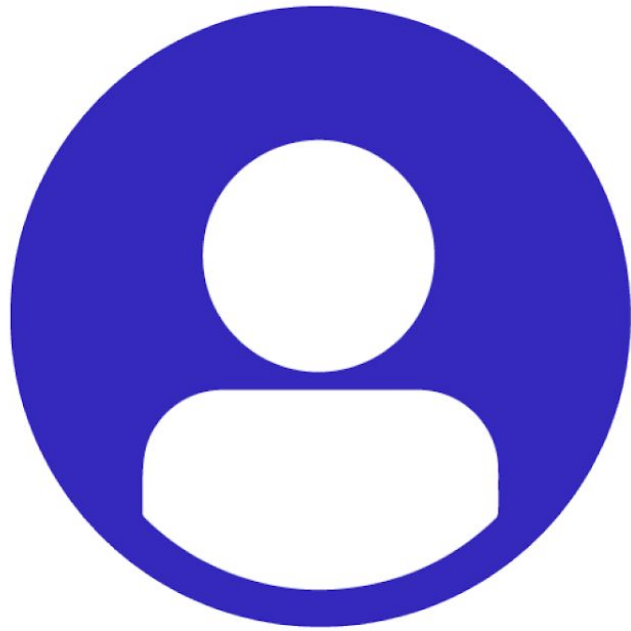
SCOPE OF THE PROBLEM



**In the U.S.
suicide is the
12th leading
cause of death.**

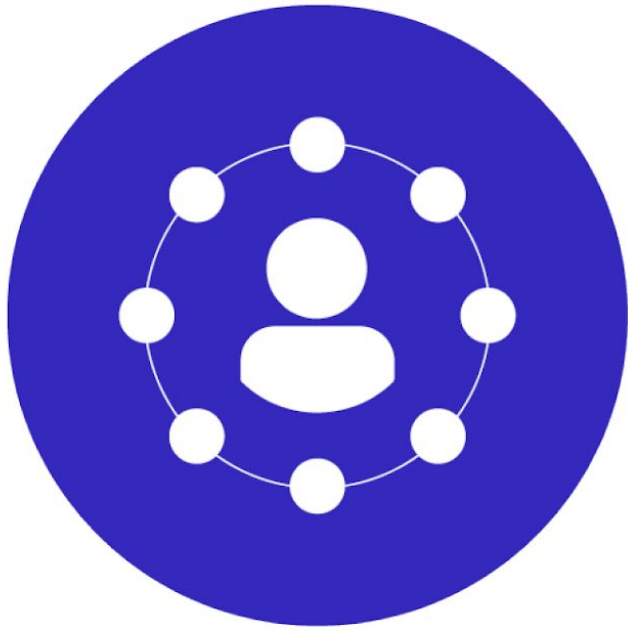
In 2020: 45,979 people died
by suicide.

SCOPE OF THE PROBLEM

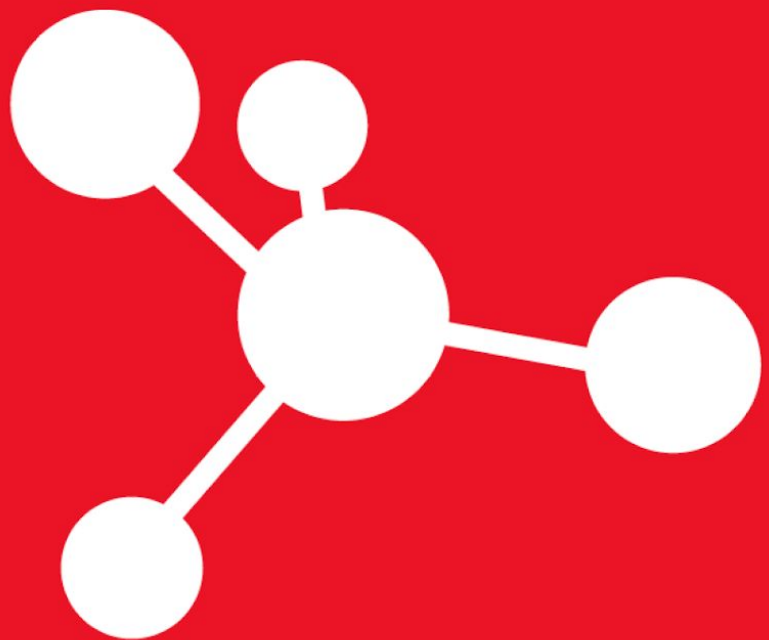


**For every
suicide,
25 others
attempt.**

SCOPE OF THE PROBLEM



**Suicide impacts
individuals and
communities.**



Research

RESEARCH



Why do people take their own lives?

There is no single cause, but rather multiple intersecting factors.

RESEARCH



The large majority of people who die by suicide have a mental health condition contributing to their death.

RESEARCH



**1 in 4 people
will experience
a mental health
condition, and
most do not go on
to die by suicide.**

RESEARCH



Physical Differences

The brains of people who die by suicide differ from those who die from other causes in both structure and function.

RESEARCH



**Most people who
are suicidal are
ambivalent about
taking their life.**

RESEARCH



The Perspective of a Suicidal Person

- Crisis point has been reached
- Desperate to escape pain
- Thinking becomes limited

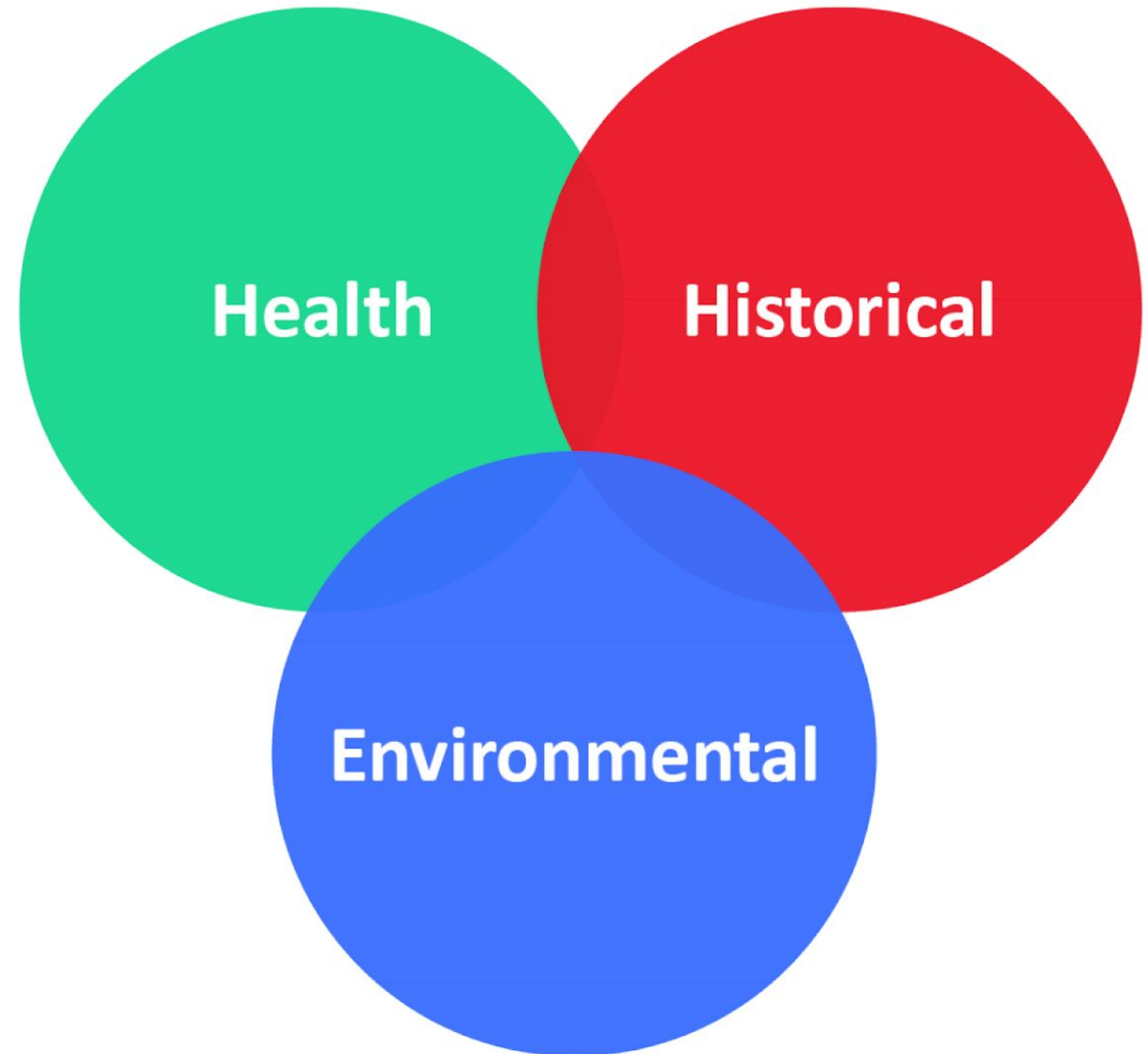
RESEARCH



Who is at risk?

RESEARCH

Risk Factors

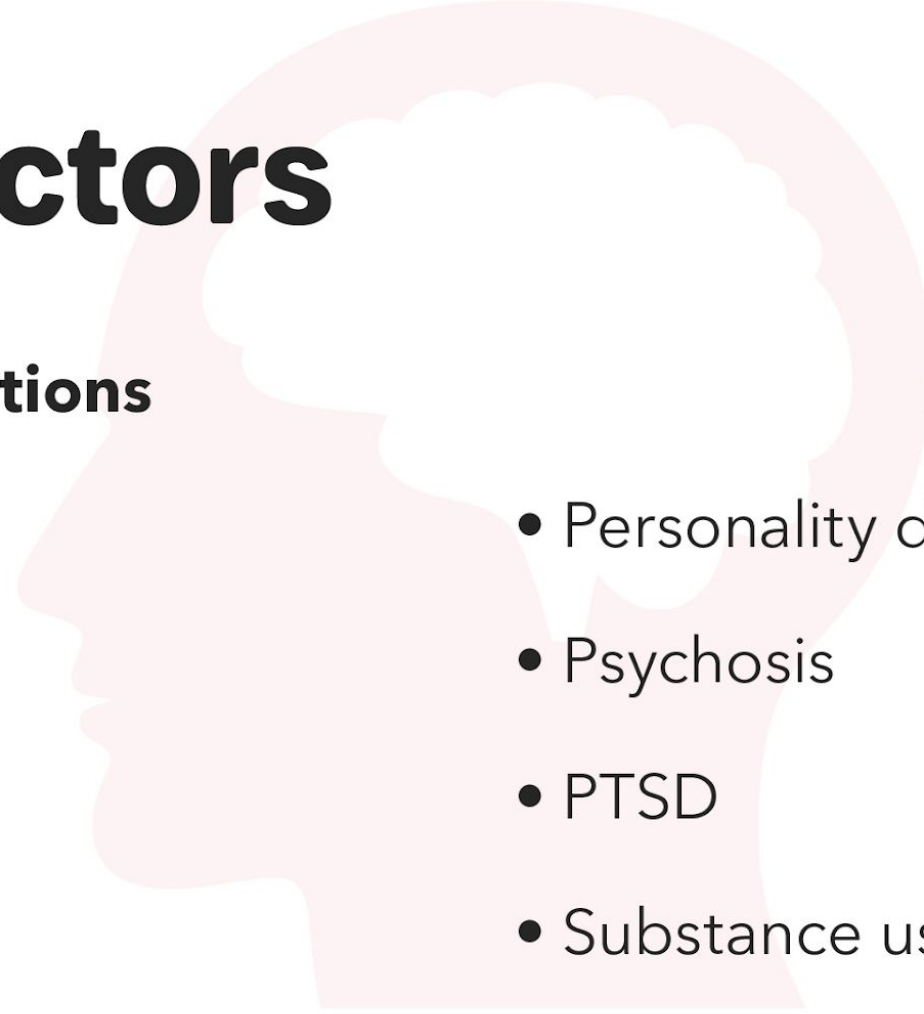


RESEARCH

Health Factors

Mental Health Conditions

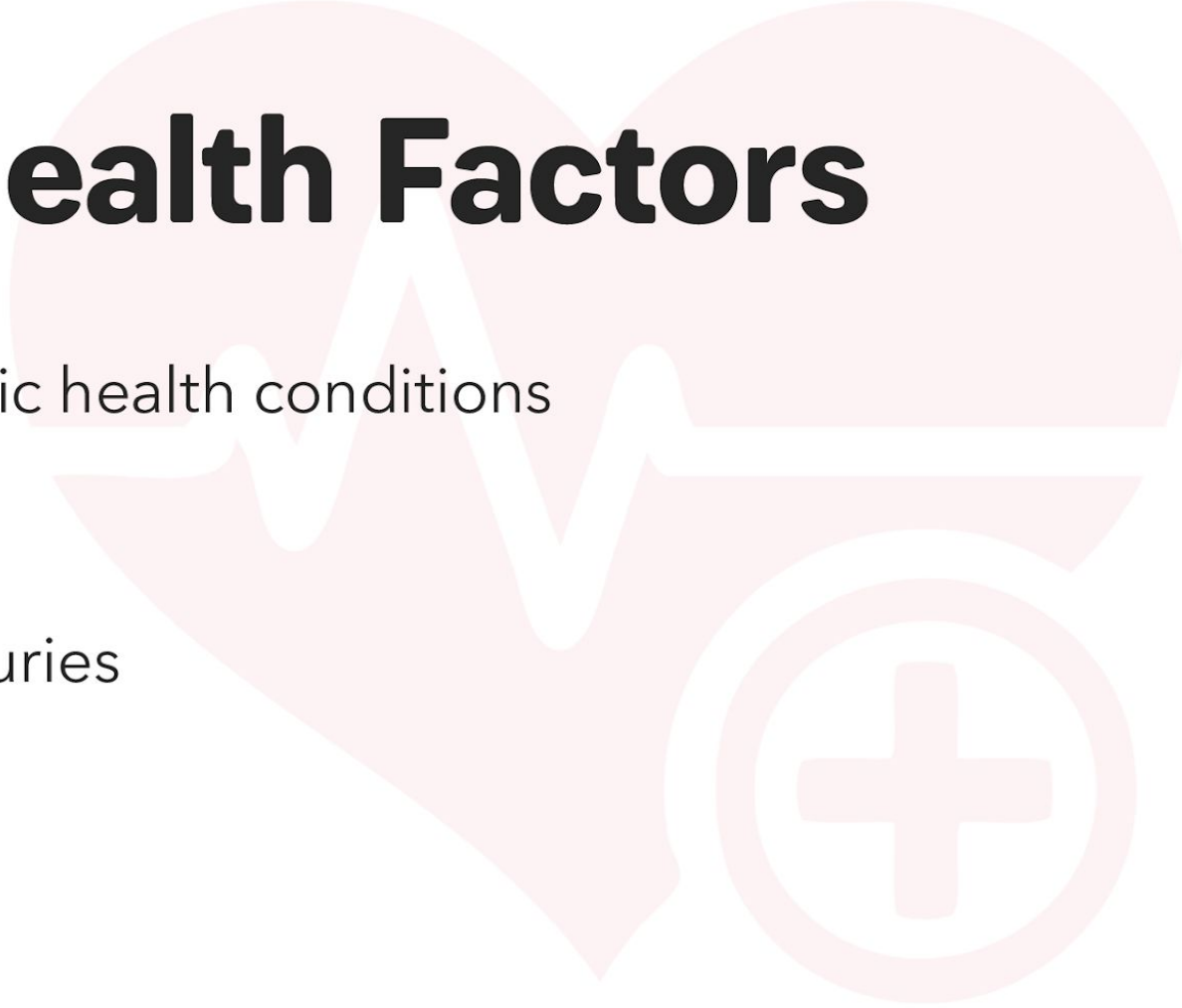
- Depression
- Bipolar disorder
- Anxiety disorders
- Eating disorders
- Personality disorders
- Psychosis
- PTSD
- Substance use disorders



RESEARCH

Other Health Factors

- Serious or chronic health conditions
- Chronic pain
- Serious head injuries



RESEARCH

Historical Factors

- Family history of suicide
- Family history of mental health conditions
- Childhood abuse
- Previous suicide attempts
- Loss

RESEARCH

Environmental Factors

- Access to lethal means
 - Exposure/contagion
 - Prolonged stress
 - Stressful life event
- 

RESEARCH

What others see:



What they may not know:



Genetic risk



Depression



Prolonged stress at work



Drinking more than usual

RESEARCH

The Importance of Research



Biomarkers



Interventions



Psychotherapies



Medication



Prevention

PREVENTION

Protective Factors

- Mental health care
 - Family and community support
 - Problem-solving skills
 - Cultural and religious beliefs
- 

PREVENTION



**Mental health care
is an important
ingredient for
preventing suicide.**

PREVENTION



We need a culture where everyone knows to be smart about mental health.

PREVENTION

Being Proactive About Mental Health



Make mental health a priority.

- See a doctor or mental health professional
- Get an evaluation
- Discuss treatment options
- Find what works best for the individual

PREVENTION



The law requires insurance plans to cover mental health services the same as physical health services.

PREVENTION

Self Care Strengthens Mental Health



Exercise



Sleep



Healthy diet



Stress management

PREVENTION



Support for loss survivors and those with lived experience.

PREVENTION



The most important thing you can put between a suicidal person and their way of ending their life is time.

PREVENTION



**Limiting access
to means
prevents suicide.**

PREVENTION

Limiting Access to Means



CO sensors in cars



Barriers on bridges



Blister packaging for medication



Secure firearms



**What You
Can Do**

SUPPORT



**Have a
Conversation**

SUPPORT



**Watch for the
warning signs**



Reach out



Seek help

SUPPORT

Suicide Warning Signs



Talk



Behavior



Mood

SUPPORT

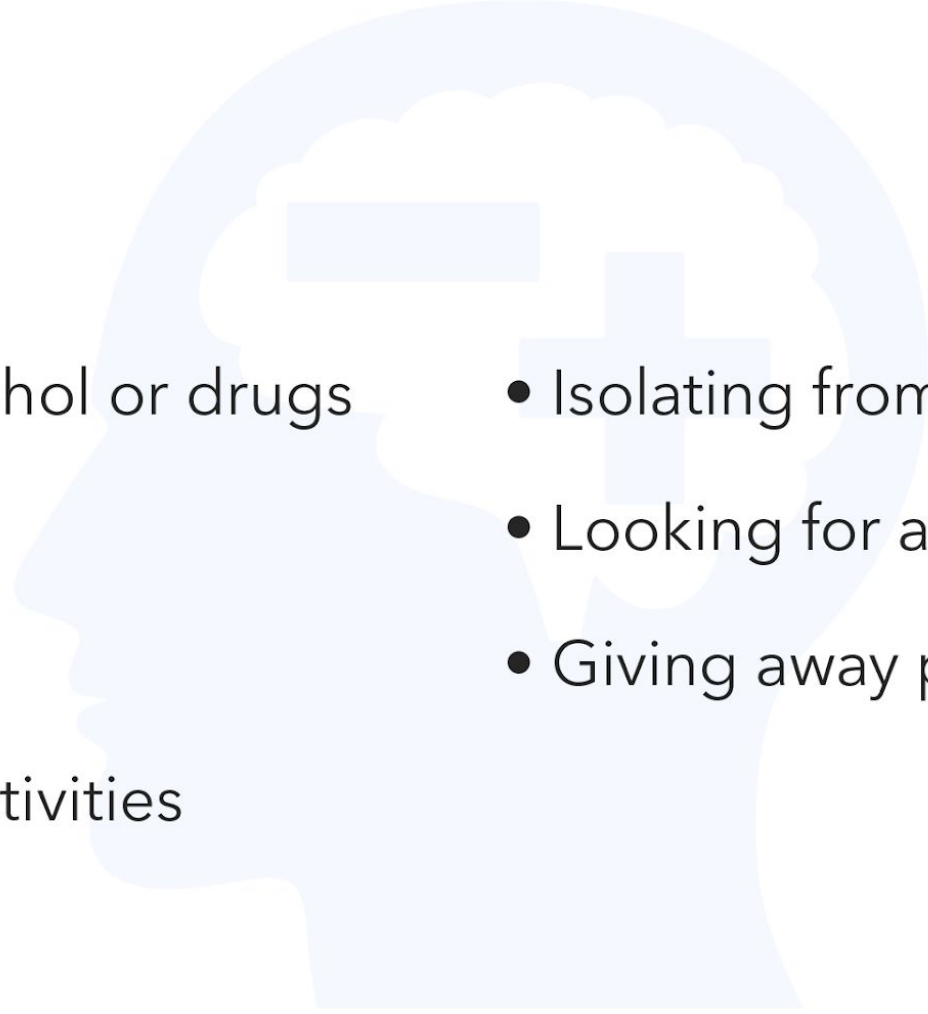
Talk

- Ending their lives
- Having no reason to live
- Being a burden to others
- Feeling trapped
- Unbearable pain

SUPPORT

Behavior

- Increased use of alcohol or drugs
- Isolating from family and friends
- Issues with sleep
- Looking for a way to kill themselves
- Acting recklessly
- Giving away possessions
- Withdrawing from activities



SUPPORT

Mood

- Depression
- Apathy
- Rage
- Irritability



SUPPORT



Trust your gut.

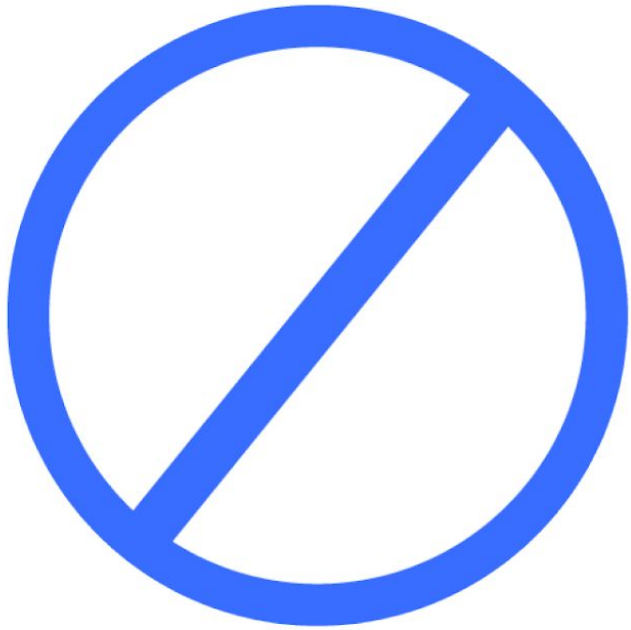
Assume you're the only one who is going to reach out.

SUPPORT

How to Reach Out

- Talk to them in private
- Listen to their story
- Express concern and caring
- Ask directly about suicidal thoughts
 - Are you thinking of ending your life?
- Encourage them to seek mental health services

SUPPORT



**Avoid minimizing
their feelings.**

**Avoid trying to
convince them life
is worth living.**

**Avoid advice to
fix it.**

SUPPORT

If you think they might make an attempt soon:



Stay with them



**Help them
secure or remove
lethal means**



**Escort them
to mental
health services**

SUPPORT



988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline:

Dial 988

**(Press 1 for Veterans,
press 2 for Spanish)**

Text 988 (English only)

Crisis Text Line:

Text TALK to 741741 for English

Text AYUDA to 741741 for Spanish

**Text with a trained crisis counselor
from the Crisis Text Line for free, 24/7**

SUPPORT



**For Emergencies
Call 911**

SUPPORT



**We can create
a culture that's
smart about mental
health and suicide
prevention.**





@afspnational

afsp.org/TalkSavesLives



**American
Foundation
for Suicide
Prevention**