TALK SAVES LIVES™
An Introduction to Suicide Prevention
Suicide is a health issue.
You can prevent suicide.
Statistics
Research
Prevention
What Can You Do?
Over 800,000 people die by suicide each year.
Someone dies by suicide every 40 seconds.
In the U.S. suicide is the 10th leading cause of death.

In 2015: 44,193 people died by suicide.
For every suicide...

25 others attempt.
Each suicide leaves behind 100+ people
Suicide has an economic impact. $51 billion per year in the United States.
Why do people take their own lives?

There is no single cause, but rather multiple intersecting factors.
9 out of 10 people who die by suicide have a mental health condition contributing to their death.
1 in 4 people will suffer from a mental health condition, and most do not go on to die by suicide.
Physical Differences

The brains of people who die by suicide differ from those who die from other causes in both structure and function.
Most people who attempt suicide are ambivalent about death.
The Perspective of a Suicidal Person

Crisis point has been reached.

Desperate to escape unbearable pain.

Thinking becomes limited.
The Goals of Research

- Biomarkers
- Interventions
- Psychotherapies
- Medication
Who is at risk?
Risk Factors

Health

Historical

Environmental
Health Factors

Mental health conditions:
- Depression
- Bipolar disorder
- Anxiety disorder
- Personality disorders
- Psychosis
- Substance use disorders
Other Health Factors

- Serious or chronic health conditions
- Serious or chronic pain
- Serious head injuries
Historical Factors

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

- Exposure/contagion
- Prolonged stress
- Stressful life event
- Access to lethal means
What others know:

What they may not know:

- Genetic risk
- Depression
- Prolonged stress at work
- Drinking more than usual
Protective Factors

- Mental health care
- Family and community support
- Problem-solving skills
- Cultural and religious beliefs
Mental health care is an important ingredient for preventing suicide.
The problem: only 2 in 5 with a mental health condition seek treatment.

We need a culture where everyone knows to be smart about mental health.
Take Care of Your 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 you
The law requires insurance plans to cover mental health services the same as physical health services.
Self Care Strengthens Mental Health

- Exercise
- Healthy diet
- Sleep
- Stress management
Limiting access to means helps prevent suicide.
Limiting Access to Means

- CO sensors in cars
- Barriers on bridges
- Blister packaging for medication
- Secure firearms
Support for loss survivors and those with lived experience.
What can you do?
Have A Conversation
Watch for the warning signs
Reach out
Seek help
Suicide Warning Signs

Talk

Behavior

Mood
Talk

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

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

- Depression
- Apathy
- Rage
- Irritability

- Impulsivity
- Humiliation
- Anxiety
- Agitation
Trust your gut.
Assume you’re the only one who is going to reach out.
How to Reach Out

- Talk to them in **private**
- **Listen** to their story
- Express **concern** and **caring**
- Ask directly about **suicide**
- Encourage them to **seek mental health services**
Avoid minimizing their feelings

Avoid trying to convince them life is worth living

Avoid advice to fix it
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
Suicide Prevention Lifeline
1-800-273-TALK
Crisis Text Line
741-741
For emergencies.

911
We can create a culture that’s **smart** about mental health and suicide prevention.