TALKING ABOUT SUICIDE

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW TO HELP SAVE A LIFE

PRESENTED BY PSYCHALIVE

LISA FIRESTONE, PH.D.
Every 40 seconds a life is lost to suicide, which means that each year we lose nearly 1 million people to suicide. (WHO)

Worldwide, more people die by suicide (800,000) than from all homicides (475,000) and wars combined.

For every one person who dies by suicide, 20 or more attempt to end their lives.

The suicide rate in the United States increased by 24 percent between 1999 and 2014.
Suicidal Ideation and Mental Health During Covid-19

- **40.9% of 5,470 respondents** who completed surveys during June reported an adverse mental or behavioral health condition, including those who reported symptoms of anxiety disorder or depressive disorder (30.9%), those with TSRD symptoms related to COVID-19 (26.3%), those who reported having started or increased substance use to cope with stress or emotions related to COVID-19 (13.3%), and those who reported having seriously considered suicide in the preceding 30 days (10.7%).
- Most commonly reported by young adults aged 18–24 years. **One in four** say they've considered suicide in the past month.
- Almost **31%** of self-reported unpaid caregivers and **22%** of essential workers also said they harbored such thoughts. Hispanic and Black respondents similarly were well above the average.

SOURCE: https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6932a1.htm
Suicide Mortality and Coronavirus Disease 2019—A Perfect Storm?

- Economic Stress
- Social Isolation
- Decreased Access to Community and Religious Support
- Barriers to Mental Health Treatment
- Illness and Medical Problems
- Outcomes of National Anxiety
- Health Care Professional Suicide Rates
- Firearm Sales
- Seasonal Variation in Rates

Source: https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamapsychiatry/fullarticle/2764584
Suicide Prevention Opportunities

- Physical Distance, Not Social Distance
- Tele–Mental Health
- Increase Access to Mental Health Care
- Distance-Based Suicide Prevention
- Media Reporting

Source: https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamapsychiatry/fullarticle/2764584
Annual Number of USA Suicides

Year: 2011 - 39,518
Year: 2012 - 40,600
Year: 2013 - 41,149
Year: 2014 - 42,273
Year: 2015 - 44,193
Year: 2016 - 44,965
Year: 2017 - 47,173
Year: 2018 - 48,344

Source: American Association of Suicidology
POLL

Have you:

- Known someone who's lost their life to suicide?
- Worked with someone who's suicidal?
- Known someone who's struggled with feeling suicidal?
- Struggled with suicidal thoughts yourself?
The Suicidal Mode

Experienced as:

• Mental pain
• Strong feelings of anger, anxiety, embarrassment, humiliation and shame
• Dissociative symptoms such as emotional numbing, detachment from body, and indifference to physical pain (Orbach, 1994)

In suicidal mode, the cognitive system is characterized by the suicidal belief system, with core beliefs such as:

- Feeling helpless (I can’t do anything about my problems”
- Being unlovable (I don’t deserve to live, I am worthless”
How Does a Suicide Occur?

Underlying Vulnerability

- Mood Disorder / Substance Abuse / Aggression / Anxiety / Impulsivity / Sexual Orientation / Abnormal Serotonin Metabolism / Family Characteristics, including history of suicidality / Sexual Abuse / Physical Abuse / Social adversity

Stress Event

- Often caused by underlying condition
- In Trouble With Law or School / Loss / Bullied

Acute Mood Change

- Anxiety / Dread / Hopelessness / Anger

Inhibition

- Family cohesion / Religiosity / Available Support / Internet / Help-seeking attitudes

Facilitation

- Method / Weapon available / Recent example / Media displays / Internet

Survival / Suicide

Gould, 2012
Those Who Desire Suicide

Those who desire Suicide:
- Perceived Burdensomeness
- Thwarted Belongingness

Those Who Are Capable of Suicide

Serious Attempt or Death by Suicide

Three-Step Theory of Suicide

1. Are you in pain and hopeless?
   - No Ideation
   - Suicidal Ideation

2. Is your pain greater than your connectedness?
   - Moderate Ideation
   - Strong Ideation

3. Are you capable of attempting suicide?
   - Ideation Only
   - Suicide Attempt

Plot Desire & Capability Together Over Time (spanning months or years)

Threshold for Attempting
Risk Factors

Health

- Mental health conditions
- Depression
- Substance use problems
- Bipolar disorder
- Schizophrenia
- Personality traits of aggression, mood changes and poor relationships
- Conduct disorder
- Anxiety disorders
- Serious physical health conditions including pain
- Traumatic brain injury

SOURCE: https://afsp.org/risk-factors-and-warning-signs
Risk Factors

Environmental

- Access to lethal means including firearms and drugs
- Prolonged stress, such as harassment, bullying, relationship problems or unemployment
- Stressful life events, like rejection, divorce, financial crisis, other life transitions or loss
- Exposure to another person’s suicide, or to graphic or sensationalized accounts of suicide

SOURCE: https://afsp.org/risk-factors-and-warning-signs
Risk Factors

Historical
- Previous suicide attempts
- Family history of suicide
- Childhood abuse, neglect or trauma

SOURCE: https://afsp.org/risk-factors-and-warning-signs
Warning Signs

Seek help as soon as possible by contacting a mental health professional or by calling the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK if you or someone you know exhibits any of the following signs:

**TALK: If a person talks about:**

- Killing themselves
- Feeling hopeless
- Having no reason to live
- Being a burden to others
- Feeling trapped
- Unbearable pain

SOURCE: https://afsp.org/risk-factors-and-warning-signs
Warning Signs

Seek help as soon as possible by contacting a mental health professional or by calling the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK if you or someone you know exhibits any of the following signs:

**BEHAVIOR:**
Behaviors that may signal risk, especially if related to a painful event, loss or change:

- Increased use of alcohol or drugs
- Looking for a way to end their lives, such as searching online for methods
- Withdrawing from activities
- Isolating from family and friends
- Sleeping too much or too little
- Visiting or calling people to say goodbye
- Giving away prized possessions
- Aggression
- Fatigue

SOURCE: https://afsp.org/risk-factors-and-warning-signs
Warning Signs

Seek help as soon as possible by contacting a mental health professional or by calling the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK if you or someone you know exhibits any of the following signs:

**MOOD:**

People who are considering suicide often display one or more of the following moods:

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Loss of interest
- Irritability
- Humiliation/Shame
- Agitation/Anger
- Relief/Sudden Improvement

SOURCE: https://afsp.org/risk-factors-and-warning-signs
Protective Factors

- Effective behavioral health care
- Connectedness to individuals, family, community, and social institutions
- Life skills (including problem solving skills and coping skills, ability to adapt to change)
- Self-esteem and a sense of purpose or meaning in life
- Cultural, religious, or personal beliefs that discourage suicide

SOURCE: https://www.sprc.org/about-suicide/risk-protective-factors
TALK to friends. Be the one who will listen and help.
BeThe1To.com (2016)

You can do something to prevent suicide. #BeThe1To save a life.

#Be The 1 To

Be the One to Help

For 2016's National Suicide Prevention Awareness Month, join the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline and partners to spread the message that we can all take action to prevent suicide, and that healing, hope and help can happen.

Spread the Message
Download our toolkit and get the 5 steps to help someone in crisis. Then share the #BeThe1To message throughout September.

Connect with Stories
Read and watch stories of individuals who have made an impact in others' lives. Then submit your own.

Watch the Live Stream
Help change the conversation. Watch our Facebook Live event and add your questions and thoughts in the comments.
#BeThe1To Action Steps

**ASK.**
Find out why this can save a life at www.BeThe1To.com
If you’re struggling, call the Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

**KEEP THEM SAFE.**
Find out why this can save a life at www.BeThe1To.com
If you’re struggling, call the Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

**BE THERE.**
Find out why this can save a life at www.BeThe1To.com
If you’re struggling, call the Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

**HELP THEM CONNECT.**
Find out why this can save a life at www.BeThe1To.com
If you’re struggling, call the Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

**FOLLOW UP.**
Find out why this can save a life at www.BeThe1To.com
If you’re struggling, call the Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
Preparing for future crises:

What a Crisis Response (Safety) Plan Is

- A memory aid to facilitate early identification of emotional crises
- A problem solving tool
- A checklist of personalized strategies to follow during emotional crises
- A collaboratively-developed strategy for managing acute periods of risk
What a Crisis Response (Safety) Plan Is NOT

1. a no-suicide contract
2. a no-harm contract
3. a contract for safety
6 Steps of Crises Response/ Safety Planning

Step 1: Recognizing warning signs

Step 2: Using internal coping strategies

Step 3: Utilizing social contacts that can serve means as a distraction from suicidal thoughts and who may offer support

Step 4: Contacting family members or friends who may offer help to resolve the crisis

Step 5: Contacting professionals and agencies

Step 6: Reducing the potential for use of lethal
Safety Plan App

- **Step 1**
  - Warning Signs

- **Step 2**
  - Internal Coping Strategies

- **Step 3**
  - Social Supports and Social Settings

- **Step 4**
  - Family and Friends for Crisis Help

- **Step 5**
  - Professionals and Agencies

**All Contacts**

Below are all the contacts you entered in your safety plan.

- **Social Contacts**
  - Kate
  - David

- **Family and Friends**
  - David

- **Professional and Agencies**
  - National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (Spanish)
  - SAMHSA Treatment Locator
  - National Suicide Prevention Lifeline
  - 911
Create your support system.
Add the contact information of the 3 people you feel you would like to talk to when you are having thoughts of suicide.

Build your safety plan.
Customize your safety plan by identifying your personal warning signs, coping strategies, distractions and personal networks. This safety plan will be with you at all times and can help you stay safe when you start thinking about suicide. Learn more about safety planning.

Access Important Resources.
Hold all your resources in the palm of your hand. Whether you're a veteran, want support from your local community, or want to learn more about suicide prevention, pick the resources that best support you.

Get support at times of greatest risk.
When you're having thoughts of suicide and it feels like there's no hope in sight, find support at your fingertips at any time of the day.
What do treatments that work have in common?

- Suicide-specific
- Don’t treat suicide as a symptom
- Empathetic, collaborative approach
- Caring contact
- Follow up
- Help person form strategies for themselves
- Know their personalized warning signs
- Use safety plan or crisis response plan
THERAPIES THAT WORK

Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT)
Marsha M. Linehan
http://behavioraltech.org/resources/whatisdbt.cfm

Collaborative Assessment & Management of Suicidality (CAMS)

Brief Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (BCBT) Craig Bryan & David Rudd

Cognitive Behavior Therapy (CBT)
Aaron Beck & Gregory Brown

ASSIP
Konrad Michel
https://www.amazon.com/Attempted-Suicide-Intervention-Program-Clinicians/dp/0889374767
TREATING SUICIDAL PATIENTS DURING COVID-19

**Initiating and Maintaining Remote Contact**
Hear recommendations for initiating and maintaining remote contact with clients who may be at risk for suicide, with an emphasis on gathering specific information to access the client and their supports in the event of an emergency, preparing for technology interruptions, and best practices to include at every visit.

**Assessing Suicide Risk**
Learn tips for assessing the suicide risk of clients remotely.

**Developing a Safety Plan Remotely**
Listen to guidance on developing a safety plan remotely, highlighting how the process is the same—and different—from safety planning in person.
Our Approach to Suicide

Real Self – Positive

One part wants to live and is goal-directed and life-affirming.

Anti Self – Critical

And one part is self-critical, self-hating and at its ultimate end, self-destructive. The nature and degree of this division varies for each individual.

Each person is divided:
Our Approach to Suicide

Negative thoughts exist on a continuum, from mild self-critical thoughts to extreme self-hatred to thoughts about suicide.

- You don't deserve anything.
- You should be by yourself.
- You're a creep.
- You need to have a drink, so you can relax.
- You should just kill yourself.
Our Approach to Suicide

Self-destructive behaviors exist on a continuum from self-denial to substance abuse to actual suicide.
Our Approach to Suicide

There is a relationship between these two continuums. How a person is thinking is predictive of how he or she is likely to behave.
Definition of the Voice

The critical inner voice refers to a well-integrated pattern of destructive thoughts toward our selves and others. The "voices" that make up this internalized dialogue are at the root of much of our maladaptive behavior.
Definition of the Voice

This internal enemy fosters:
• Inwardness
• Distrust
• Self-criticism
• Self-denial
• Addictions
• A retreat from goal-directed activities
Definition of the Voice

This “voice” affects every aspect of our lives:

• Self-esteem/ confidence
• Personal relationships
• Performance (school/ work)
• **ESPECIALLY** self-destructive behavior
Self  Anti-Self
Exercise: Your Critical Inner Voice Attacks

Self-critical attacks as “I” statements

Examples:
I’m so ugly.
I’m look stupid.
I’m worthless.

Self-critical attacks as “you” statements

Examples:
You’re so ugly.
You look stupid.
You’re worthless.
Exercise: Keeping a Journal: Your Critical Inner Voice/ The Real You

My critical inner voice as “you” statements

Examples:
No one likes you. They don’t want you around.

The real me as “I” statements

Examples:
A lot of people like me, and I add to the situation.
Exercise: A Plan for Action

Actions dictated by my inner critic:

Examples:
Don’t bother trying. Just curl up on the couch.
You should just be alone.
You can’t trust anyone, so don’t get too close.

Actions to take that reflect the real me:

Examples:
I want to be active and pursue my goals.
I don’t want to be isolated and will seek out friends.
I want to stay vulnerable in my relationships.
Suicide Prevention:
Making a Difference

Be Aware of the Do’s…

• Be aware. Learn the warning signs.
• Get involved. Become available. Show interest and support.
• Ask if she or he is thinking about suicide.
• Be direct. Talk openly and freely about suicide.
• Be willing to listen. Allow expressions of feelings. Accept the feelings.
• Be non-judgmental. Don’t debate whether suicide is right or wrong or feelings are good or bad. Don’t lecture on the value of life.
• Offer hope that alternatives are available and take action.
Suicide Prevention: Making a Difference

... and the Don’ts

• Don’t dare him or her to do it.
• Don’t ask why. This encourages defensiveness.
• Offer empathy, not sympathy.
• Don’t act shocked. This will put distance between you.
• Don’t be sworn to secrecy. Seek support.
Common Emotions Experienced in Suicide Grief

- Shock
- Guilt
- Despair
- Stress
- Rejection
- Confusion
- Helplessness
- Denial
- Anger
- Disbelief
- Sadness
- Loneliness
- Self-Blame
- Depression
- Pain
- Shame
- Hopelessness
- Numbness
- Abandonment
- Anxiety

These feelings are normal reactions, and the expression of them is a natural part of grieving. Grief is different for everyone. There is no fixed schedule or one way to cope.
Self-Care & Help Seeking Behaviors

- Ask for help
- Talk to others
- Get plenty of rest
- Drink plenty of water, avoid caffeine
- Do not use alcohol and other drugs
- Exercise
- Use relaxation skills
Self-Compassion
A Healthier Way of Relating to Yourself

“Being touched by and not avoiding your suffering”

From Kristin Neff:
Self-compassion is not based on self-evaluation. It is not a way of judging ourselves positively; it is a way of relating to ourselves kindly.

Three Elements:

1. **Self-kindness** vs. Self-judgment
2. **Mindfulness** vs. Over-identification with thoughts
3. **Common humanity** vs. Isolation

SOURCE: http://www.self-compassion.org/
National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1(800)273-8255

Get Help For Someone Online

It can be scary when someone in your social media network mentions suicide. Bookmark these links so you can help a friend find help.

Why call?  Who should call?  What happens when I call?

No matter what problems you are dealing with, we want to help you find a reason to keep living. By calling 1-800-273-TALK (8255) you'll be connected to a trained counselor who will listen.

Call 24/7
1-800-273-8255

Follow us

More help for

Veterans
Young Adults
For Help in Immediate Crisis

IF:

Someone is threatening to hurt or kill themselves

Someone is looking for ways to kill themselves: seeking access to pills, weapons or other means

Call 911 or seek immediate help
In this Workshop you will learn to:

- Identify the most important techniques/tools for assessing suicidal risk
- Implement effective state-of-the-art crisis interventions for suicidal patients that will allow clinicians to practice to the standard of care
- Recognize innovative and effective suicide therapies that will allow clinicians to be more effective with suicidal clients
- Find effective copies strategies for the emotional impact of working with clients who attempt suicide or actually die by suicide

SIGN UP AT http://psychalive.org.pages.ontraport.net/suicide-ecourse
eCourses
See a full list of online courses at ecourse.psychalive.org
Webinars

See a full list of upcoming and archived Webinars at psychalive.org

FEATURING:
- Dr. David Jobes
- Dr. John Draper
- Dese’Rae L. Stage
Websites

- PSYCHALIVE.ORG – Suicide Prevention Advice Page

- National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention
  http://actionallianceforsuicideprevention.org/

- American Association of Suicidology’s Survivors’ Support Group Directory
  http://www.suicidology.org/web/guest/support-group-directory

- IASP Suicide Survivor Organizations (listed by country) -
  http://www.iasp.info/resources/Postvention/National_Suicide_Survivor_Organizations/
Books & Films

Public

Professional

Survivors

Visit www.psychalive.org
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