



Mental Health First Aid for Suicide Prevention

Webinar presented by Mental Health First Aid USA in observance of World Suicide Prevention Day – September 10, 2010

Program content based upon Mental Health First Aid USA



Meena Dayak

Vice President of Marketing &
Communications, National Council for
Community Behavioral Healthcare



Overview

- + Suicide in the United States
 - Facts
 - Risk Factors
 - Warning Signs

- + How to Help
 - *Suicidal Behavior*
 - *Treatments Available*
 - *Survivors of Suicide*



What Is Mental Health First Aid?

Mental Health First Aid is the help offered to a person developing a mental health problem or experiencing a mental health crisis. The first aid is given until appropriate treatment and support are received or until the crisis resolves.

Mental Health First Aid USA is coordinated by the National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare, the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, and the Missouri Department of Mental Health.



Why Mental Health First Aid?

- + Mental health problems are common.
- + Stigma is associated with mental health problems.
- + Many people are not well informed about mental health problems.
- + Professional help is not always on hand.
- + People often do not know how to respond.
- + People with mental health problems often do not seek help.



The Mental Health First Aid Action Plan

- + **A**ssess for risk of suicide or harm
- + **L**isten nonjudgmentally
- + **G**ive reassurance and information
- + **E**ncourage appropriate professional help
- + **E**ncourage self-help and other support strategies



What Is a Mental Disorder?

A **mental disorder** or **mental illness** is a diagnosable illness that:

- + Affects a person's thinking, emotional state, and behavior
- + Disrupts the person's ability to
 - Work
 - Carry out daily activities
 - Engage in satisfying relationships



U.S. Adults with a Mental Disorder in Any One Year

Type of Mental Disorder	% Adults
Anxiety disorder	18.1
Major depressive disorder	6.7
Substance use disorder	3.8
Bipolar disorder	2.6
Eating disorders	2.1
Schizophrenia	1.1
Any mental disorder	26.2



Recovery from Mental Illness

“Recovery is the process in which people are able to live, work, learn, and participate fully in their communities.”

“For some, this is the ability to live a fulfilling and productive life despite a disability.”

“For others, recovery implies the reduction or complete remission of symptoms.”

— *President’s New Freedom Commission on Mental Health, 2003*



Marie Dudek

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention
Central Florida Chapter

Creating Today, Inc.

e-mail: mdudek@creatingtoday.net



“If the general public understands that suicide and suicidal behaviors can be prevented, and people are made aware of the roles individuals and groups can play in prevention, many lives can be saved.”

- National Strategy for Suicide Prevention



Facts About Suicide

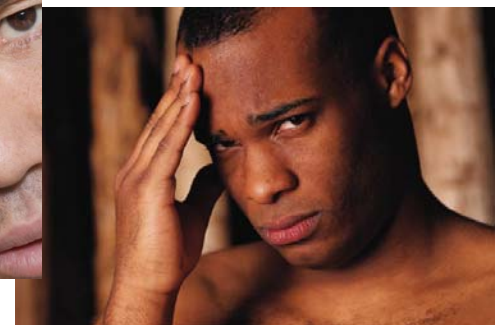
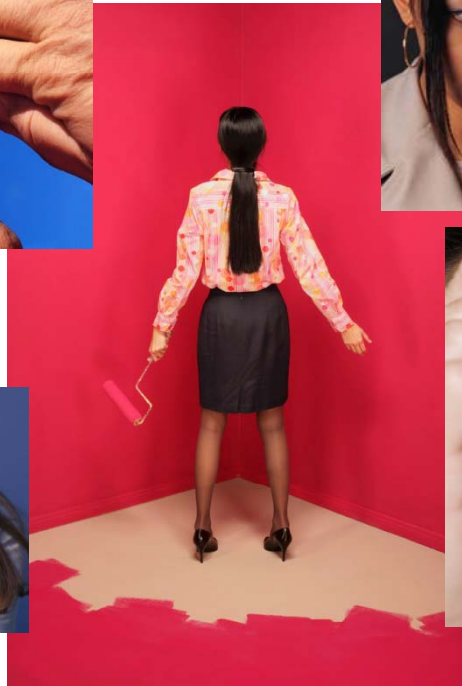
- In 2007, 34,598 people in the U.S. died by suicide
- U.S. suicide rate = 11.5 (11.5 suicides for every 100,000 people)
- 4,324 people under age 25 died by suicide (12.5% of total)
- Suicide rate for youth (ages 15-24) = 9.8
- Suicide is the 3rd leading cause of death for adolescents and young adults (ages 15–24)

Why Do People Die by Suicide?

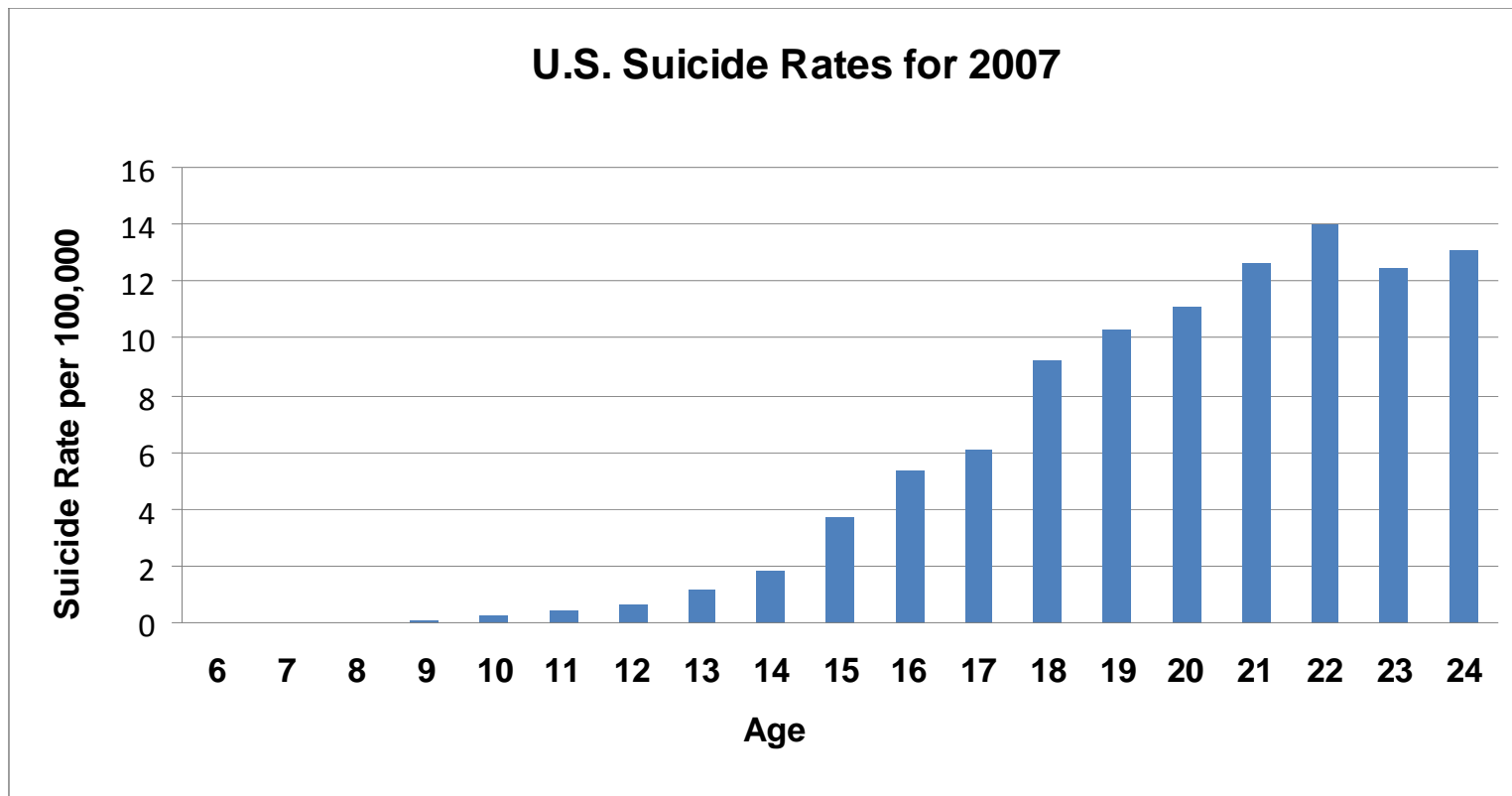
They are in intense psychological pain.



They want the pain to stop.



Youth Suicide Rates by Age (Ages 6-24)





Suicide Attempts

- + No official count; emergency room statistics *underestimate* extent of problem
- + In U.S. overall, **25** suicide attempts estimated to occur for each suicide death
- + Among youth aged 10-24, **65-200** attempts for each suicide
- + Among the elderly, **4** attempts for each suicide
- + About **7%** of students in grades 9-12 (1 of every 14) report making a suicide attempt in the past year
- + Adolescent girls report **twice** as many suicide attempts as boys



Suicide Risk Assessment

- + Gender
- + Age
- + Chronic physical illness
- + Mental illness
- + Use of alcohol or other substances
- + Less social support
- + Previous attempt
- + Organized plan



Warning Signs of Suicide

- + Threatening to hurt or kill oneself
- + Seeking access to means
- + Talking or writing about death, dying, or suicide
- + Feeling hopeless
- + Feeling worthless or a lack of purpose
- + Acting recklessly or engaging in risky activities
- + Feeling trapped
- + Increasing alcohol or drug use
- + Withdrawing from family, friends, or society
- + Demonstrating rage and anger or seeking revenge
- + Appearing agitated
- + Having a dramatic change in mood



How to Help a Person Who May be Suicidal

- + Have a conversation: discuss your concerns, ask them directly whether they are suicidal and whether they have a plan
 - “Are you having thoughts of suicide?”
 - “How are you thinking of harming yourself?”
- + Ensure your safety and their safety
 - Do not leave an actively suicidal person alone
- + Involve them in decision making about connecting to professional help or other supports
- + If you have serious concerns, call 911 or the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at
1-800-273-TALK (8255)



How to Help: Treatments Available

- + Supportive counseling
 - Providing emotional support & teaching problem-solving skills
- + Psychological Therapies
 - Cognitive behavioral therapy, stress management, interpersonal psychotherapy
- + Medical Treatment
 - Medication, electroconvulsive therapy (ECT)
- + Peer & Community support
 - Friends, family, faith networks, support groups
- + Self-Help strategies
 - Exercise, CBT based books, relaxation therapy, light therapy



How to Help: Survivors of Suicide

- + Accept the intensity of the grief
- + Listen with your heart
- + Avoid simplistic explanations and clichés
- + Be compassionate
- + Respect the need to grieve
- + Understand the uniqueness of suicide grief
- + Be aware of holidays and anniversaries
- + Be aware of support groups
- + Respect faith and spirituality
- + Work together as helpers
- + Children experience many feelings of adult grief



How to Help: Non-Suicidal Self Injury

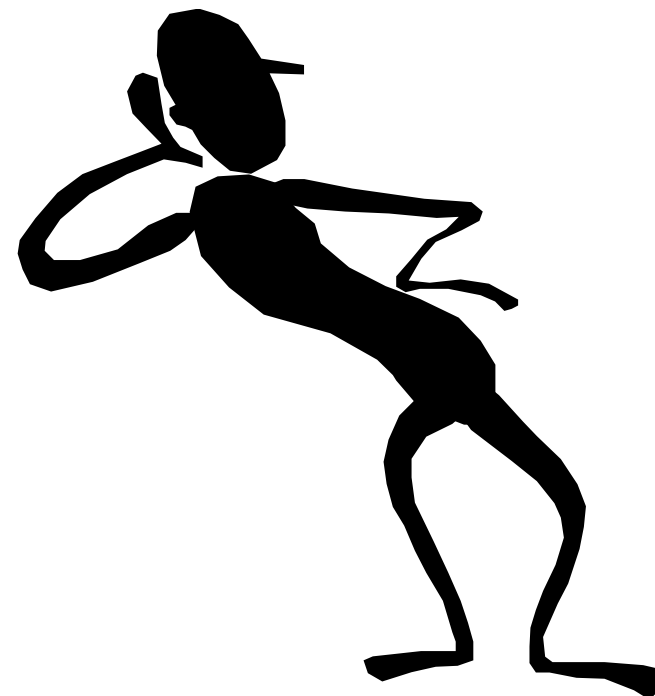
- + Assist the person by letting him or her know you are concerned and are willing to help.
- + Recognize that self-injury is usually a symptom of serious psychological distress.
- + Let the person know that treatment is available for this distress.
- + Ensure that the person knows where professional mental health care is available.
- + Encourage, but **do not** force, the person to seek professional treatment.



**Each of us plays a role
in preventing suicide.**

Are you okay?

How can I help you?





What Can I Do Today?

- + Tell five people something you learned from this webcast.
- + Memorize the Suicide Prevention Lifeline Phone Number:
1-800-273-TALK (8255)
- + If concerned about someone, reach out to them today.
- + If you are having suicidal thoughts or dealing with depression or substance misuse, contact a professional today.
- + Find out more about a nearby Mental Health First Aid certification course.

What Can I Do Today?

The International Association for Suicide Prevention Invites you to Light a Candle at 8 PM



World Suicide Prevention Day

On September 10th

**World Suicide
Prevention Day**

Light a candle near
a window at 8 PM

to show your support
for suicide prevention

to remember a lost loved one

and for the survivors
of suicide.

www.iasp.info



Questions on Suicide Prevention

?



Additional Resources

If **you** or someone
you know is
in **emotional** distress
or **suicidal crisis**,

call

1-800-273-TALK (8255).
National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

www.SuicidePreventionLifeline.org



American Foundation
for Suicide Prevention

www.afsp.org



AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF SUICIDOLOGY

www.suicidology.org

www.ForSuicideSurvivors.com



SUICIDE PREVENTION ACTION NETWORK USA
Opening Minds. Changing Policy. Saving Lives.

www.spanusa.org

Mental Health First Aid in your Community



- + A recording of this webinar & the power point will be available on the National Council website 48 hours after it has ended.
- + Visit www.MentalHealthFirstAid.org for further information on the course and to find an instructor near you.
- + Become a fan of Mental Health First Aid USA on Facebook & get updates and information on a variety of mental health topics.
- + For any further questions, contact Bryan Gibb at bryang@thenationalcouncil.org or Susan Partain at susanp@thenationalcouncil.org or 202.684.3732.