

YOUTH SUICIDE FACT SHEET

- Suicide accounts for more than 1 in 10 deaths among youth aged 10 to 24 in America.
- Suicide is the third leading cause of death among young people in our country- following unintentional injuries and homicide.
- One in 20 high school students reported both suicide attempts and involvement in physical fights in the past year.
- Students who reported attempting suicide in the past 12 months were nearly four times as likely to report involvement in physical fights.
- One in four youth suicide victims injured or killed someone else before their suicide.
- Among youth aged 10-14 years, suffocation has replaced firearms as the most common method of suicide. In 2001, suffocation suicides in this age group occurred nearly twice as often as firearm suicides.
- Among youth 10-14 years of age, males are 3 times as likely to commit suicide.
- Among youth 15-19 years of age, males are 5 times as likely to commit suicide.
- Among youth 20-24 years of age, males are 7 times as likely to commit suicide.
- Females are 3 times more likely to report a history of attempted suicide.
- There are an estimated 10 to 25 attempted suicides for each suicide completed; the ratio is higher among women and youth and lower in men and the elderly.
- Risk factors for attempted suicide in youth include depression (especially Bipolar Disorder), alcohol or other drug abuse, a history of physical or sexual abuse, a history of aggressive and or disruptive behavior, estrangement from family, breakup from girlfriend/boyfriend among adolescents, poor social support, previous attempts, suicidal ideation, an organized plan for suicide, access to firearms, loss of rational thinking and hopelessness.

What should I do if someone tells you they are thinking about suicide?

You should take their distress seriously, listen non-judgmentally, and help them get to a professional for evaluation and treatment. If someone is in imminent danger of harming himself or herself, do not leave the person alone. Call his/her parents or guardians to begin arranging emergency care. Call 911 if necessary. When someone is in a suicidal crisis, it is important to limit access to firearms or other lethal means of committing suicide. It is important to limit access to drugs or alcohol. It is important to arrange for appropriate supervision and to provide ample social support. It is important to receive evaluation and treatment as soon as possible.