

Working Together to Prevent Suicide

Suicide Prevention Week September 9 - 15, 2018 World Suicide Prevention Day September 10, 2018



suicideispreventable.org

Each Mind Matters: California's Mental Health Movement supports that suicide prevention matters!

Wednesday, September 11: Can Suicide Be Prevented?

In June, the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported](#) that suicide rates have been rising in nearly every state in the country. We also lost two cultural icons to suicide, people who seemed to have it all.

The need to find an explanation that makes sense of painful events is strong. When these aren't forthcoming, it's tempting to fall back on some common misconceptions and assumptions. We do this to place painful events in line with our comfort zone.

True or False? Test yourself on the following question and think about why you answered as you did.

1. **Suicide prevention begins long before a suicide crisis.**
2. **Anyone can be at risk.**
3. **The vast majority of those who attempt suicide will not go on to die by suicide.**
4. **Talking directly about suicide can help someone in distress open up.**
5. **Suicide is preventable.**

ANSWER KEY: All the statements are **TRUE!**

1. **Suicide prevention begins before an actual suicide crisis.** Suicide prevention strategies must address not only in the days and weeks around a crisis, but in the months or even years before a crisis occurs. Upstream strategies support wellness and resiliency and help prevent a suicide crisis from developing in the first place.
2. **Anyone can be at risk of suicide.** Men in middle age and older die at higher rates than any other group, but most men will never attempt suicide. The path to suicide is complex and predicting it is not as easy as looking for a simple cause and effect. Losing a job, being bullied, having served in the military, or having mental health diagnosis are not causes of suicide. Resting on these assumptions can lead to missed opportunities to recognize pain and reach out to help.

3. **Most of those who attempt suicide will not go on to die by suicide.** Most suicide crises are short-lived. Anything that creates time and space between a distressed person and means of suicide can save their life. No action is too small, from a kind word, to not leaving a person alone, to offering to store firearms or pills.
4. **Talking directly about suicide can help someone in distress.** Even when we know that asking someone about suicide will not cause them to consider suicide, it can be difficult raise the topic. Practice saying the words out loud and even role play with a friend. Find tips to start a conversation at www.suicideispreventable.org
5. **Suicide IS preventable... Right?...**
A recent RAND report asked the question “[Is Suicide Preventable](#)”? For those of us in the field, it can be an uncomfortable read. In our eagerness to communicate a message of hope and help, some uncomfortable truths and complexities can be glossed over. Warning signs can be well hidden. Or perhaps they were not new or uncommon but things that had been happening for a long time. Families and friends were concerned and did everything they could. Knowing the signs is a start, but not enough. Suicide can be prevented, but we must recognize that the task is large and cannot fall on the shoulders of one person, one family, one agency, or one approach. Only by **working together** can we see the change we wish to see.

Share these resources with others in your community:

If you have lost someone to suicide, support is available. Contact your local behavioral health agency or suicide prevention crisis center to find services in your area. Friends for Survival is an organization that provides a wealth of resources for people all over California. Visit their web site at <http://www.friendsforsurvival.org>

If you would like to learn more about starting a survivor support organization in your area, visit the EMM Resource Center <https://emmresourcecenter.org/resources/pathways-purpose-and-hope-guide-creating-sustainable-suicide-bereavement-support-program>”

INSERT LOCAL RESOURCES AS APPROPRIATE