

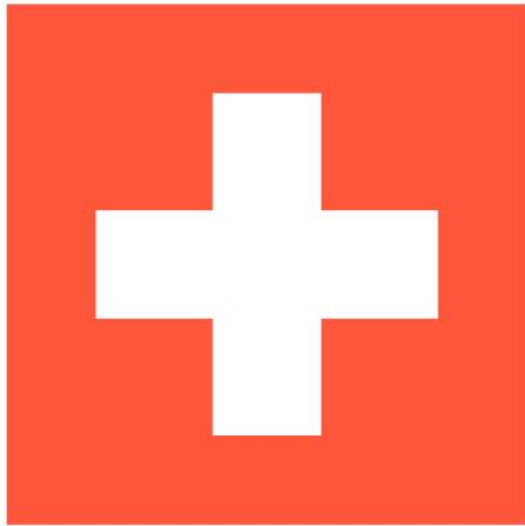
# TALK SAVES LIVES™

**An Introduction to Suicide Prevention**

[afsp.org/TalkSavesLives](https://afsp.org/TalkSavesLives)



**American  
Foundation  
for Suicide  
Prevention**



Suicide  
is a **health**  
issue.



Suicide  
can be  
**prevented.**



**Scope of the Problem**



**Research**



**Prevention**



**What You Can Do**



**How** we talk  
about suicide  
matters.

# Language Do's and Don'ts

## Avoid

"Committed suicide"

"Failed" or "successful"  
attempt

## Say

"Died by suicide"

"Ended his/her life"

"Killed himself/herself"

"Suicide attempt" or  
"death by suicide"



Scope of the  
Problem



Over  
**800,000**  
people die  
by suicide  
each year.



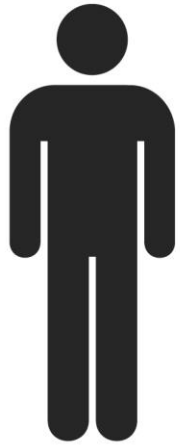


Someone  
dies by  
suicide every  
**40 seconds.**



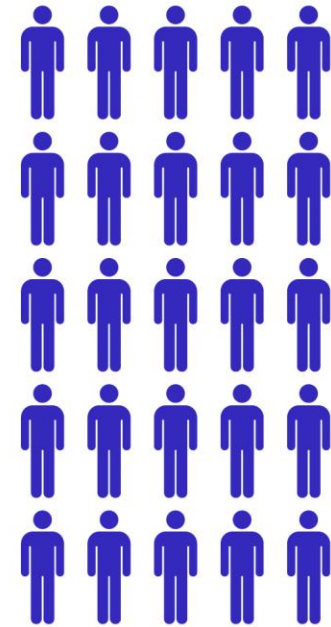
In the U.S.  
suicide is the  
**10th leading  
cause of death.**

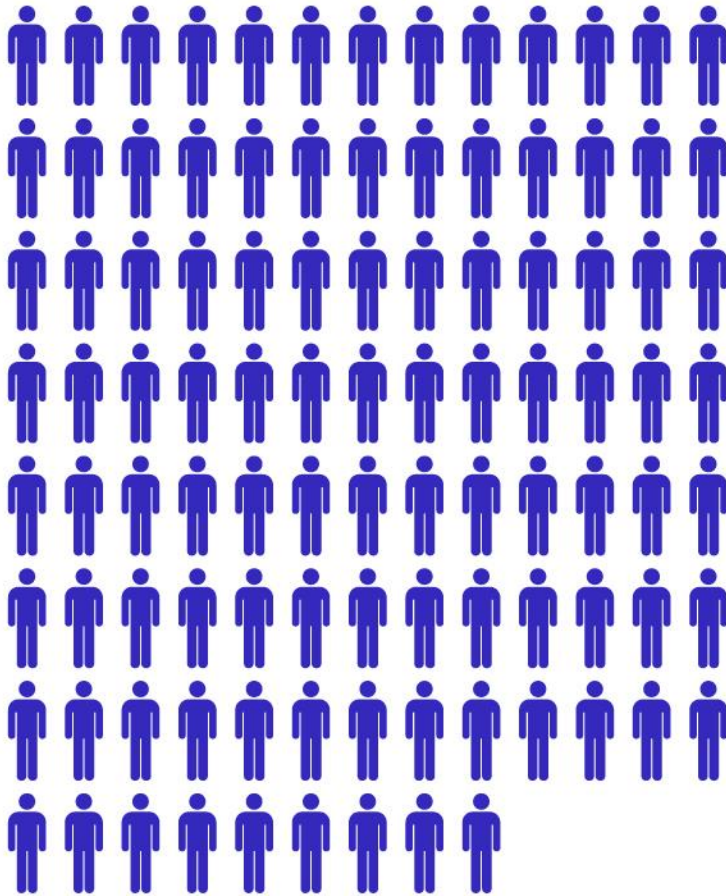
In 2017:  
**47,173**  
people died  
by suicide.



For every  
suicide...

**25 others  
attempt.**



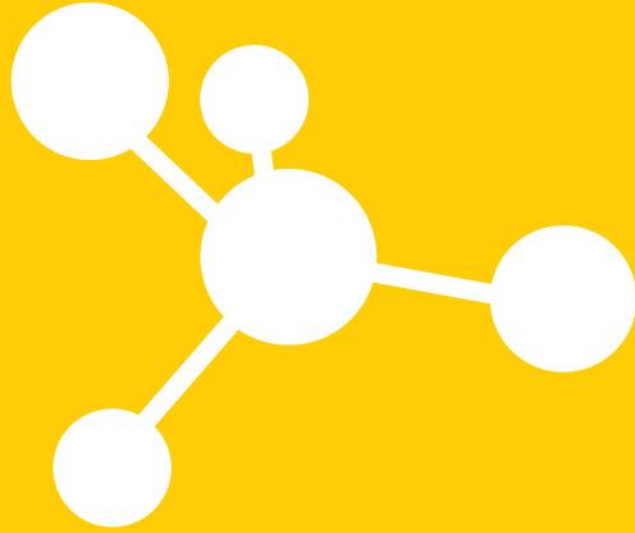


Suicide impacts  
**individuals** and  
**communities.**



Suicide has an economic impact.

**\$69 billion per year  
in the United States.**



Research



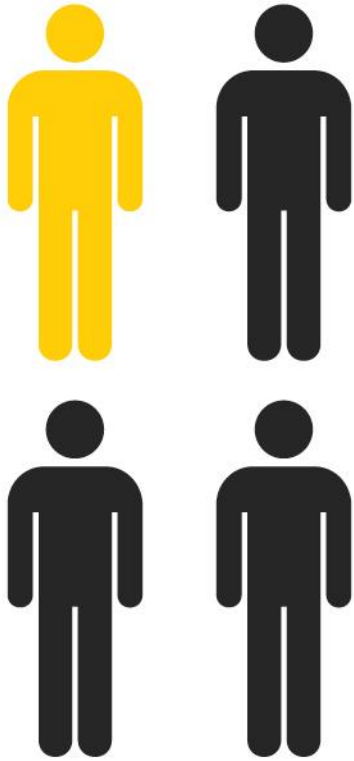
Why do people take their own lives?

There is **no single cause**, but rather multiple intersecting factors.



The large majority of people who die by suicide have a mental health condition contributing to their death.





**1** in **4** people will experience a mental health condition, and most **do not** go on to **die** by suicide.

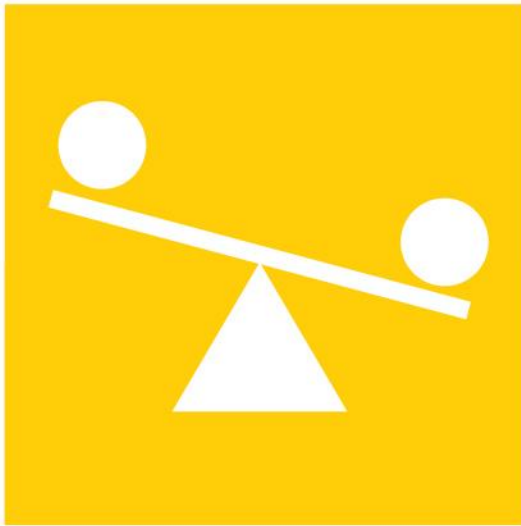


# Physical Differences

The brains of people who die by suicide **differ** from those who die from other causes in both **structure** and **function**.



Most people who are suicidal are ambivalent about taking their life.



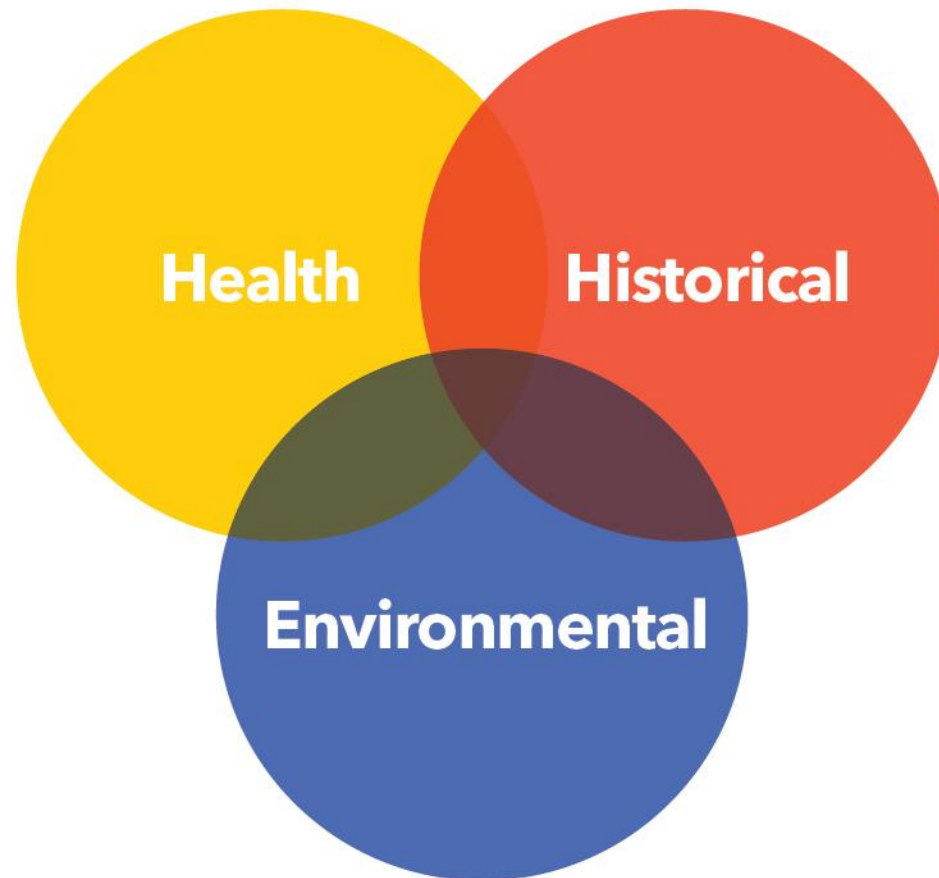
# The Perspective of a Suicidal Person

- **Crisis** point has been reached
- Desperate to escape **pain**
- Thinking becomes **limited**



Who is  
at **risk**?

# Risk Factors



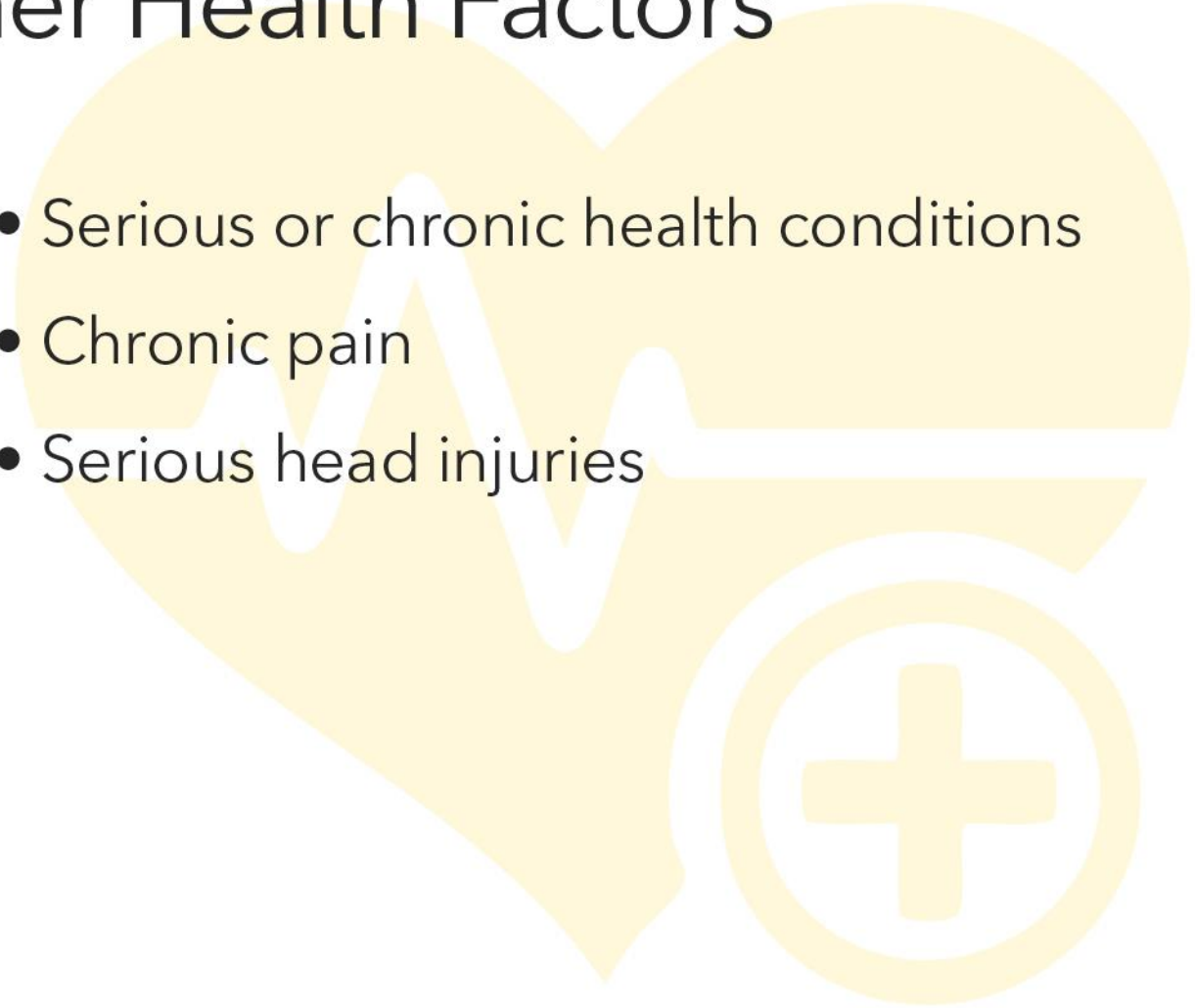
# Health Factors

## **Mental health conditions:**

- Depression
- Bipolar disorder
- Anxiety disorders
- Eating disorders
- Personality disorders
- Psychosis
- PTSD
- Substance use disorders

# Other Health Factors

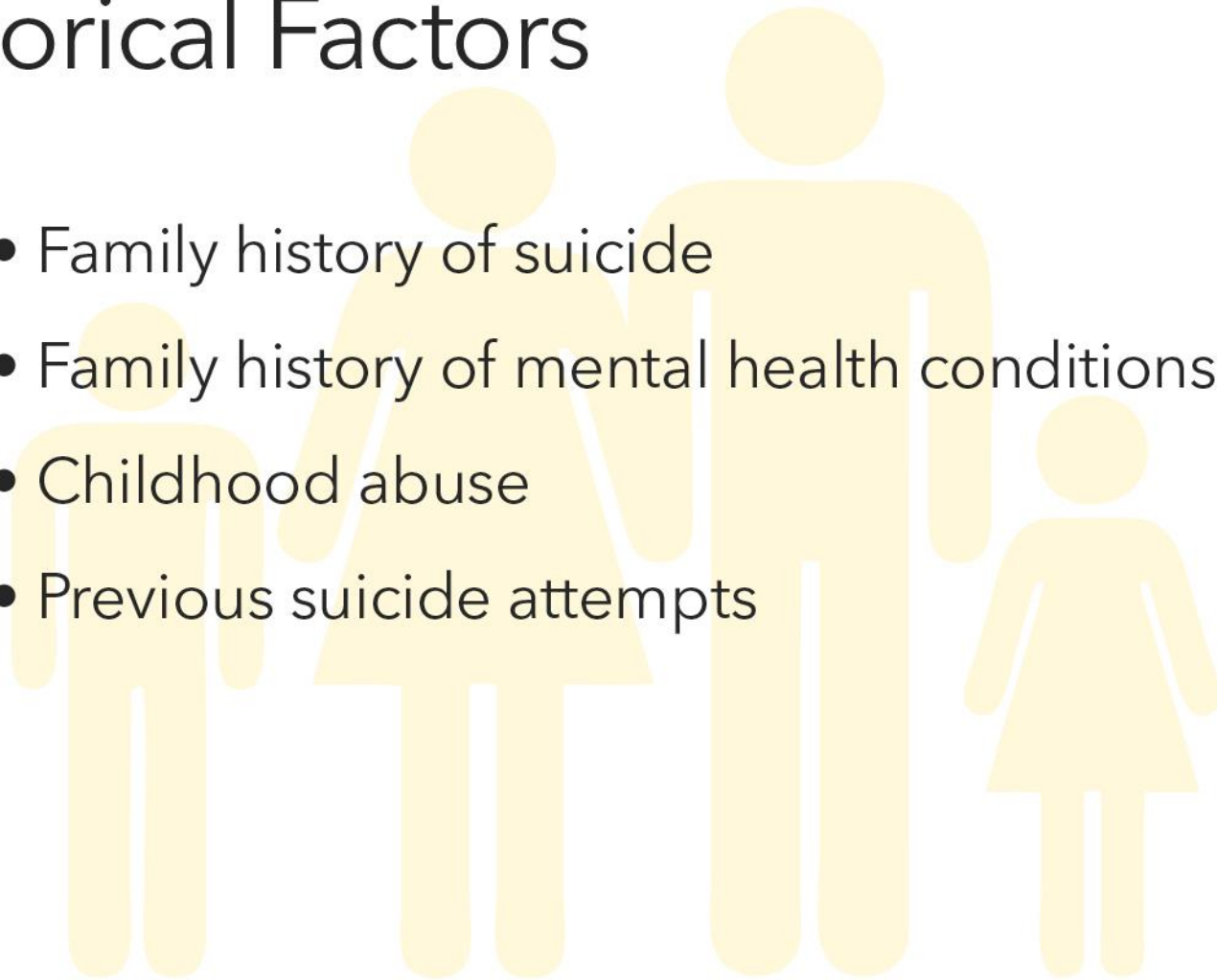
- Serious or chronic health conditions
- Chronic pain
- Serious head injuries



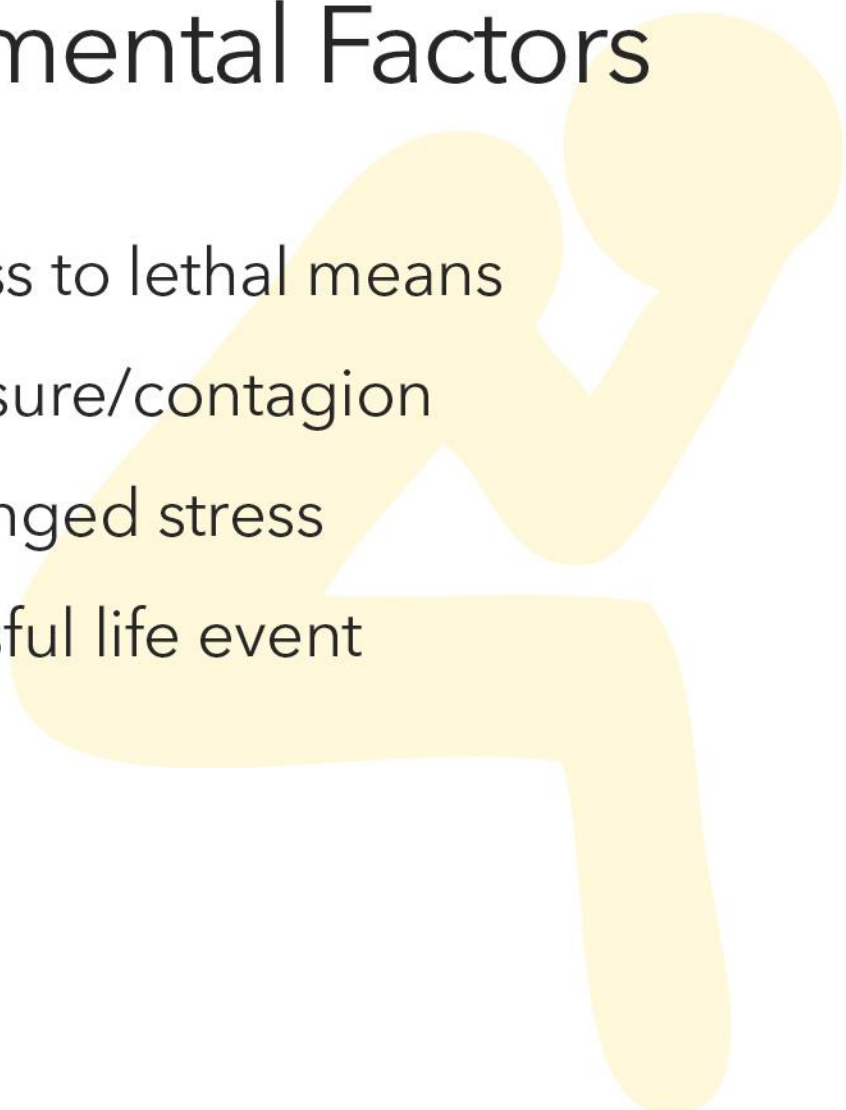


# Historical Factors

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



# Environmental Factors

- Access to lethal means
  - Exposure/contagion
  - Prolonged stress
  - Stressful life event
- 

**What others see:**



**What they may not know:**



**Genetic risk**



**Depression**



**Prolonged  
stress at work**



**Drinking more  
than usual**

# The Importance of Research



**Biomarkers**



**Interventions**



**Psychotherapies**

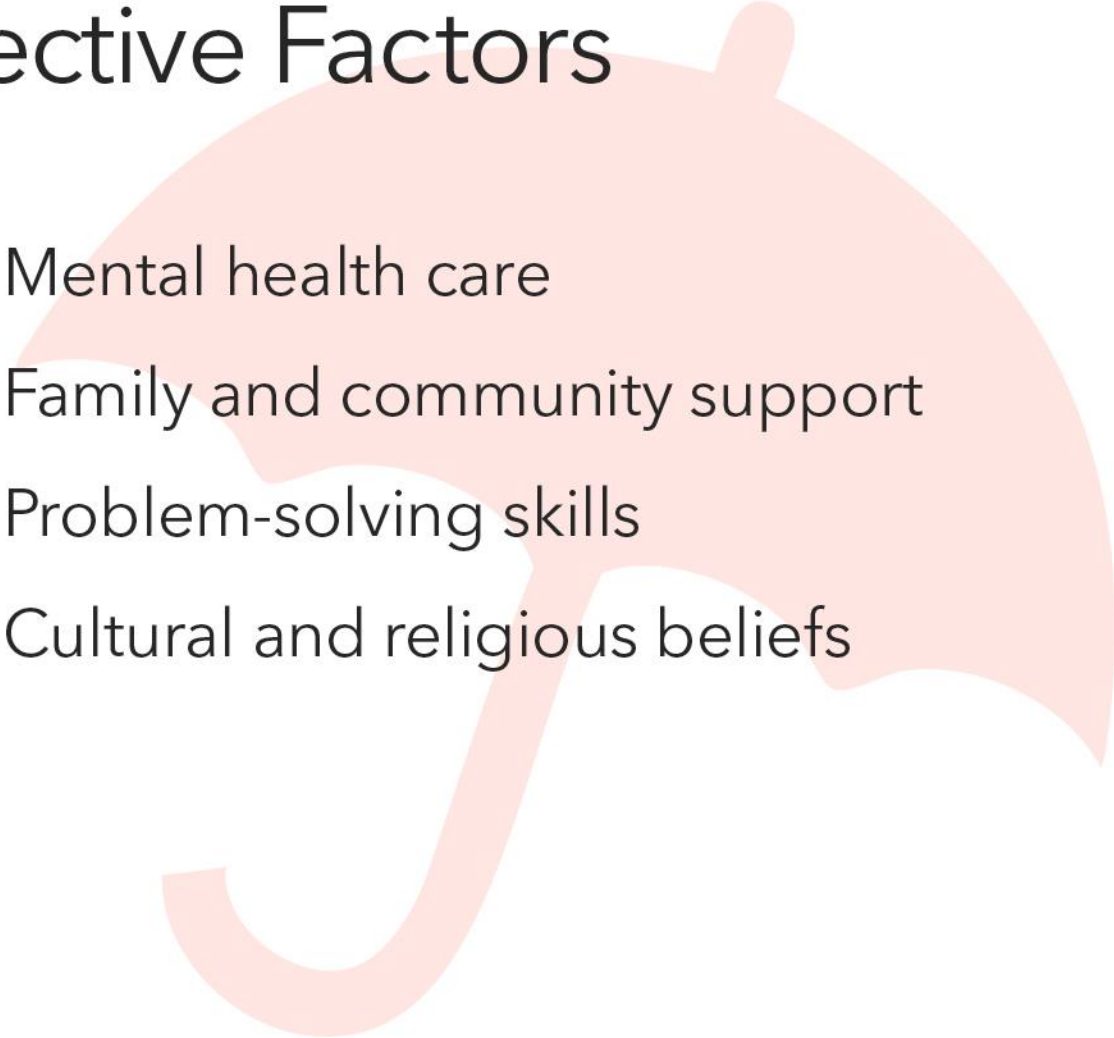


**Medication**



Prevention

# 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.



# Being Proactive About 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 the individual



The law requires insurance plans to cover **mental health** services the same as **physical health** services.

# Self Care Strengthens Mental Health



**Exercise**



**Healthy diet**

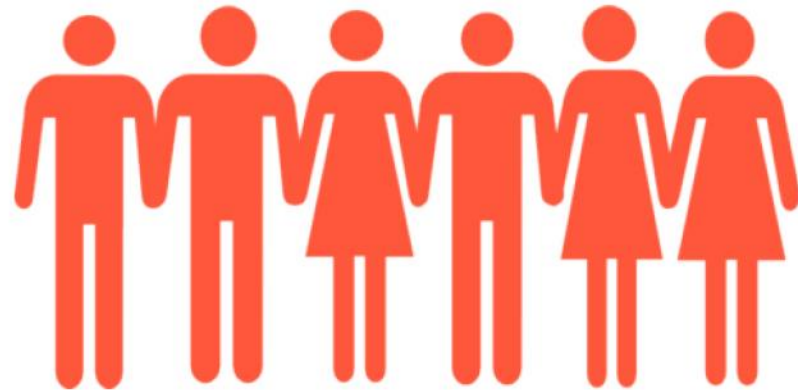


**Sleep**



**Stress  
management**

**Support** for loss survivors and those with lived experience.





The most important thing you can put between a suicidal person and their way of ending their life is **time.**

**Limiting access  
to means** prevents  
suicide.

# Limiting Access to Means



**CO sensors  
in cars**



**Barriers on  
bridges**



**Blister packaging  
for medication**



**Secure firearms**



What **You** Can Do



# Have a Conversation

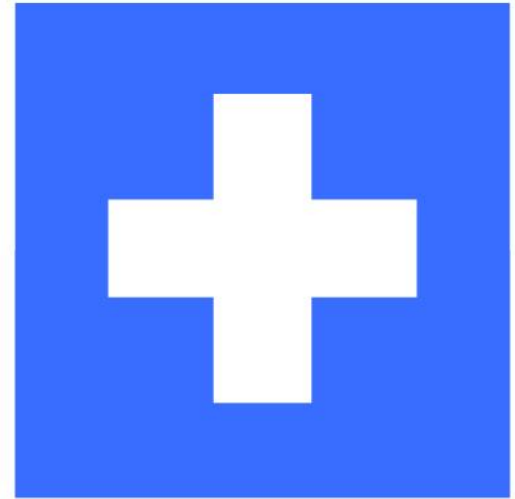




Watch for the  
**warning signs**



**Reach out**



**Seek help**

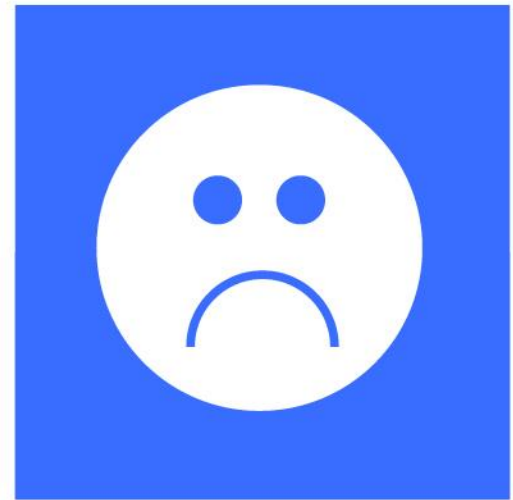
# Suicide Warning Signs



**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
- Issues with sleep
- 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

**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 suicidal thoughts
  - Are you thinking of ending your life?
- 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.

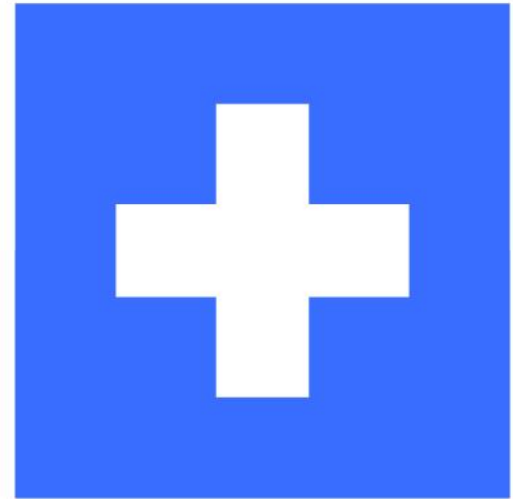
If you think they might make an attempt soon.



**Stay** with them



Help them **secure or remove lethal means**



**Escort** them to mental health services



Suicide Prevention  
Lifeline

**Call 1-800-273-TALK**

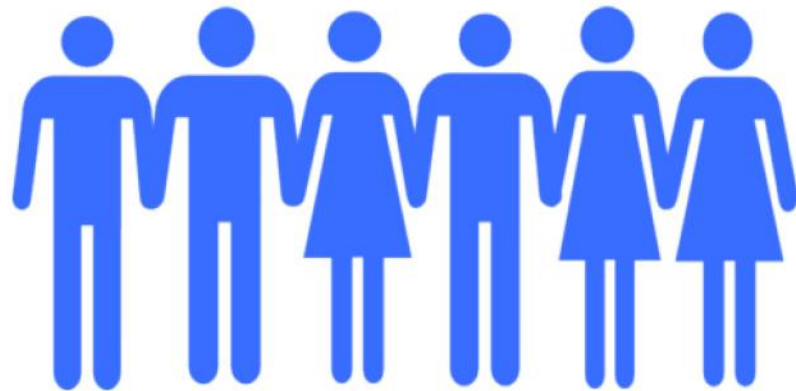
Crisis Text Line

**Text TALK to 741741**



For  
Emergencies  
**Call 911**

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





TALK  
SAVES  
LIVES

Help us improve our program by  
completing the feedback form.

**Visit [afsp.org/TSLparticipant](https://afsp.org/TSLparticipant)**



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