

Treatment

Psychotherapy, like cognitive behavioral therapy and dialectical behavior therapy, can help a person with thoughts of suicide recognize ineffective patterns of thinking and behavior, validate their feelings and learn coping skills. Suicidal thoughts are a symptom, just like any other - they can be treated, and they can improve over time.

Treatment may also include self-help and peer support groups for people and families led by and for people with personal experience. These groups are comforting because participants learn that others have experiences like theirs and that they're not alone. NAMI Connection and NAMI Family Support groups are examples of peer support groups. You may also find **Navigating a Mental Health Crisis: A NAMI Resource Guide** helpful.

For more information on Suicide Prevention, go to

NAMI Flagstaff at www.namiflagstaff.org

NAMI Arizona at www.namiarizona.org

NAMI National at www.nami.org

National Institute on Mental Health at: www.nimh.nih.gov

If you or someone you know is contemplating suicide call

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

800-273-TALK (8255) or call 911 immediately.

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SUICIDE PREVENTION

It can be frightening if someone you love talks about suicidal thoughts. It can be even more frightening if you find yourself thinking about dying or giving up on life. Not taking these kinds of thoughts seriously can have devastating outcomes, as suicide is a permanent solution to often temporary problems. Comments or thoughts about suicide - also known as suicidal ideation - can begin small like, "I wish I wasn't here" or "Nothing matters." But over time, they can become more explicit and dangerous.

A few of the Warning Signs

- Inability to perform daily tasks like bathing, brushing teeth, brushing hair, changing clothes
- Increased alcohol and drug use
- Indifferent, hostile or aggressive behavior
- Withdrawal from friends, family and community
- Declining grades or work performance
- Increased agitation, verbal threats, out-of-control behavior, destroys property
- Increased depression, withdrawn; or suddenly happy or calm after period of depression

Risk Factors

Research has found that 46% of people who die by suicide had a known mental health condition. Several other things may put a person at risk of suicide:

- A family history of suicide
- Substance abuse, which can create mental highs and lows that worsen suicidal thoughts.
- Intoxication. More than 1 in 3 people who die from suicide are under the influence of alcohol at the time of death.
- Access to firearms
- A serious or chronic medical illness
- Although more women than men attempt suicide, men are nearly 4 times more likely to die by suicide.
- Prolonged stress, a history of abuse or recent tragedy

Suicidal behaviors are a psychiatric emergency.

If you or a loved one starts to take any of the steps below, seek immediate help from a health care provider.

- Stockpiling pills or buying a weapon
- Giving away personal possessions
- Tying up loose ends, like organizing personal papers or paying off debts
- Preoccupation with death
- Making or changing a will

- Talking as if they're saying goodbye or going away forever

Support in a Crisis

When a suicide-related crisis occurs, friends and family are often caught off-guard, unprepared and unsure of what to do. The behaviors of a person experiencing a crisis can be unpredictable, changing dramatically without warning.

A few ways to approach a suicide-crisis

- Talk openly and honestly. Don't be afraid to ask questions like: "Do you have a plan for how you would kill yourself?"
- Remove means such as guns, knives or stockpiled pills
- Calmly ask simple and direct questions, like "Can I help you call your psychiatrist?"
- Express support and concern.
- If you're nervous, try not to fidget or pace.
- Don't argue, threaten or raise your voice.
- Don't debate whether suicide is right or wrong.
- Don't say "We all go through tough times like these. You'll be fine" or "It's all in your head."
- Don't promise secrecy. Say instead: "I care about you too much to keep this kind of secret. You need help and I'm here to help you get it."

If you are unsure, a licensed mental health professional can help assess. Mental health professionals are trained to help people understand their feelings and improve mental wellness and resiliency. Like any other health emergency, it's important to address a mental health crisis like suicide quickly and effectively.