

What you need to know about

Suicide

If you or someone you know is in immediate danger or imminent crisis of suicide, call 911

What is it?

Facts about suicide:

- Thoughts of suicide are a common symptom of mood disorders
- 80% of suicides are carried out by individuals suffering from a depressive illness
- 50 to 80% of seniors who commit suicide have a history of major depression
- Women suffering through a depressive episode most often attempt suicide in the latter stages of the episode
- Women are three to four times more likely to attempt suicide than men, but men are more likely to die by suicide
- Men typically attempt suicide early in the depressive period

bullying and sexual orientation issues. Warning signs: eating disorders, deliberate self-harm, withdrawal from normal activities, exceptional and extreme mood swings, perfectionist behaviour or extreme self-critical behaviour

People who have recently had a major loss or life change are at higher risk, as grief can change to depression that may last several weeks or longer. Warning signs: major changes in attitude, changes in eating or sleeping habits, loss of energy or loss of interest in things that were once enjoyed.

Especially vulnerable are people who are recovering from an episode of depression or who have a history of suicide attempts, or who have just been released from the hospital.

How prevalent is it?

According to the World Health Organization, there were 3,926 suicides in Canada in 2012.

Who is at risk?

Older adults are at higher risk due to life changes and transitions through loss, lifestyle changes due to physical disability, a move from independent living to assisted living and social isolation and abuse. Warning signs: appetite changes, lack of participation in social events, signs of abuse and neglect.

Young people are at higher risk due to family and school pressures, major life changes, hormone changes,

What are the risk factors/triggers?

Warning signs of suicide include:

- **Unbearable feelings:** depression can cause extreme feelings of hopelessness, despair and self-doubt. The more acute the feelings, the higher the suicide risk
- **Putting affairs in order:** making final plans, preparing wills or life insurance, or arranging for the family's welfare
- **Rehearsing suicide:** seriously discussing one or more specific suicide methods, purchasing weapons or collecting large quantities of medication, or rationalizing suicide as a viable option

- **Drug or alcohol abuse:** intoxication may cause impulsive behaviour and make the person more likely to act on suicidal thoughts
- **Isolation:** cutting off friendships and social connections
- **Sudden sense of calm:** someone with an active mood disorder who has just passed an episode's lowest point on the way to recovery. Suddenly appears calm and settled in such a way that is not in keeping with their state of recovery.

What do I need to tell my doctor?

If you are thinking of suicide, tell someone – a doctor, friend, family member, teacher

If you are planning to commit suicide, get help right away – call 911.

Where can I learn more?

Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention
www.suicideprevention.ca

Ontario Association for Suicide Prevention
ospn.ca

Kids Help Phone
www.kidshelpphone.ca

Distress Centres of Toronto
torontodistresscentre.com

Distress Centres Ontario
dcontario.org

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