

Suicide: Did You Know?

Fact: Suicide happens much more often than most people are aware. For every 2 homicides there are three suicides, and yet with the media coverage for homicide, you'd expect the reverse to be true. In many areas there are more deaths from suicide than there are to motor vehicle crashes. A tremendous amount of money is put toward road care, safe driver enforcement, and vehicle safety, and yet very little is dedicated to suicide awareness, prevention and intervention. A suicide completion happens about once every sixteen minutes, and a suicide attempt occurs about once a minute. Between 12%-20% (depending on region of the country) of people have seriously considered suicide at some point in their lives.

Fact: There are almost always warning signs, but others are often unaware of their significance or do not know what to do.

Fact: Studies of suicide victims have shown that more than half had sought medical help within six months before their deaths.

Fact: Bringing up the subject of suicide and discussing it openly is one of the most helpful things you can do because it relieves suicidal people of the incredible sense of isolation they experience. Asking about suicide relays that someone has insight to their pain and cares about their well-being.

Fact: Almost all people who eventually die by suicide have given some clue or warning. When suicidal threats are not taken seriously, the person may conclude that no one cares.

Fact: Most suicidal people are ambivalent, wavering until the very last moment between wanting to live and wanting to die. For example, people in a suicidal crisis frequently call for help immediately following a suicide attempt. The impulse to end it all, however overpowering, does not last forever. Suicide is preventable.

References:

- Hemenway, D. & Miller, M. (2002). Association of rates of household handgun ownership, lifetime major depression, and serious suicidal thoughts with rates of suicide across US census regions. *Injury Prevention*, 8, 313-316
- NAMI
- Yellow Ribbon International Suicide Prevention Program