

# WHAT CAN WE DO TO PREVENT SUICIDE?

*Preventing Suicide: A Technical Package of Policy, Programs, and Practices*  
<https://go.usa.gov/xQBGc>

## Preventing suicide involves everyone in the community.

Provide financial support to individuals in need.



**States** can help ease unemployment and housing stress by providing temporary help.

Strengthen access to and delivery of care.



**Health care systems** can offer treatment options by phone or online where services are not widely available.

Create protective environments.



**Employers** can apply policies that create a healthy environment and reduce stigma about seeking help.

Connect people within their communities.



**Communities** can offer programs and events to increase a sense of belonging among residents.

Teach coping and problem-solving skills.



**Schools** can teach students skills to manage challenges like relationship and school problems.

Prevent future risk.



**Media** can describe helping resources and avoid headlines or details that increase risk.

Identify and support people at risk.



**Everyone** can learn the warning signs for suicide, how to respond, and where to get help.

## Know the Suicide WARNING SIGNS

- Feeling like a burden
- Being isolated



- Increased anxiety
- Feeling trapped or in unbearable pain

- Increased substance use
- Looking for a way to access lethal means



- Increased anger or rage
- Extreme mood swings

- Expressing hopelessness
- Sleeping too little or too much



- Talking or posting about wanting to die
- Making plans for suicide

## 5 STEPS TO HELP SOMEONE AT RISK

1. Ask.
2. Keep them safe.
3. Be there.
4. Help them connect.
5. Follow up.

Find out why this can save a life by visiting:  
[www.BeThe1To.com](http://www.BeThe1To.com)

# WHAT CAN BE DONE

## THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IS

- Tracking the problem to understand trends and the groups at greatest risk (for example, see [www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/nvdrs](http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/nvdrs)).
- Developing, implementing, and evaluating suicide prevention strategies.
- Supporting local, state, tribal, national, and other partners to prevent suicide (for example, see <https://go.usa.gov/xQBGc>).

## STATES AND COMMUNITIES CAN

- Identify and support people at risk of suicide.
- Teach coping and problem-solving skills to help people manage challenges with relationships, jobs, health, or other concerns.
- Promote safe and supportive environments. This includes safely storing medications and firearms to reduce access among people at risk.
- Offer activities that bring people together so they feel connected and not alone.
- Connect people at risk to effective and coordinated mental and physical healthcare.
- Expand options for temporary assistance for those struggling to make ends meet.
- Prevent future risk of suicide among those who have lost a friend or loved one to suicide.

## HEALTH CARE SYSTEMS CAN

- Provide high-quality, ongoing care focused on patient safety and suicide prevention.
- Make sure affordable and effective mental and physical healthcare is available where people live.
- Train providers in adopting proven treatments for patients at risk of suicide.

## EMPLOYERS CAN

- Promote employee health and well-being, support employees at risk, and have plans in place to respond to people showing warning signs.
- Encourage employees to seek help, and provide referrals to mental health, substance use, legal, or financial counseling services as needed.

## EVERYONE CAN

- Ask someone you are worried about if they're thinking about suicide.
- Keep them safe. Reduce access to lethal means for those at risk.
- Be there with them. Listen to what they need.
- Help them connect with ongoing support. You can start with the Lifeline (1-800-273-8255).
- Follow up to see how they're doing.
- Find out why this can save a life by visiting: [www.BeThe1To.com](http://www.BeThe1To.com).

The media can avoid increasing suicide risk (e.g., by not using dramatic headlines or providing explicit details) and encourage people to seek help.

View recommendations at:

[www.ReportingOnSuicide.org](http://www.ReportingOnSuicide.org)

If you need help for yourself or someone else, please contact the

**National Suicide Prevention Lifeline**

Talk: 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

Chat: [www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org)



[www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/suicide](http://www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/suicide)  
[www.cdc.gov/mmwr](http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr)

**For more information, please contact**

Telephone: 1-800-CDC-INFO (232-4636)

TTY: 1-888-232-6348 | Web: [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
1600 Clifton Road NE, Atlanta, GA 30333

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