

TA TIDBITS

Rapid response to questions from the field

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Prevalence of Youth Suicide and Suicide Prevention

Suicide is the second leading cause of death for American youth ages 15-19¹ and the third leading cause for youth ages 10-24². Rates of suicidal ideation and attempted suicide are also high. In a recent national survey, 17% of high school students reported seriously considering suicide and 7% reported attempting suicide in the 12 months prior to the survey.³

Certain subpopulations are disproportionately affected by suicide. For example, boys are more likely to die from a suicide attempt, whereas girls are more likely to report attempting suicide. The highest rates of suicide are among Native American/Alaskan Native youth. Hispanic youth are also more likely to attempt suicide as compared to black and white non-Hispanic youth.⁴

Identifying early warning signs can be key in preventing youth suicides. In 2015, a panel of national and international experts met to identify common warning signs that preceded an incident of youth suicide, based on a literature review, a survey of youth suicide attempt survivors, and focus groups of youth and parents. They identified the following as early warning signs:

1. Talking about or making plans for suicide.
2. Expressing hopelessness about the future.
3. Displaying severe/overwhelming emotional pain or distress.
4. Showing worrisome behavioral cues or marked changes in behavior, particularly in the presence of the warning signs above. Specifically, this includes significant:
 - Withdrawal from or changing in social connections/situations
 - Changes in sleep (increased or decreased)
 - Anger or hostility that seems out of character or out of context
 - Recent increased agitation or irritability⁵

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention also identifies seeking a way to kill oneself and increased substance abuse as additional warning signs.⁶ While much of the research into suicide prevention strategies focuses on adults, responding to early warning signs, screening at-risk youth, and restricting lethal means (i.e., reducing access to methods used for suicide, such as firearms or medications) may also be effective prevention strategies among youth at risk for suicide.⁷

If you or someone you know needs immediate help, there are several crisis lines available:

- ***National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK (8255)***
- ***Crisis Text Line: Text HOME to 741-741***
- ***The Trevor Lifeline: 1-866-488-7386***



General Resources

[Youth Suicidal Behavior Fact Sheet](#)

[Suicide Prevention Resources for Teens](#)

[Save a Friend: Tips for Teens to Prevent Suicide](#)

[Preventing Youth Suicide: Tips for Parents and Educators](#)

[Preventing Suicide: A Toolkit for High Schools](#)

[Making Educators Partners in Youth Suicide Prevention: Act on Facts Training](#)



Resources for Specific Populations

[Screening and Assessment for Suicide Prevention: Tools and Procedures for Risk Identification among Juvenile Justice Youth](#)

[Preventing Juvenile Suicide through Improved Collaboration: Strategies for Mental Health and Juvenile Justice Agencies](#)

[Talking About Suicide and LGBT Populations](#)

[Engaging Native Youth](#)

- 1 Heron, M. (2017). Deaths: Leading Causes for 2015. *National Vital Statistics Reports*, 66(5), 17.
- 2 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2017). Suicide Among Youth. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/healthcommunication/toolstemplates/entertainmenttips/SuicideYouth.html>
- 3 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2017). *Trends in the Prevalence of Suicide-Related Behaviors National YRBS: 1991-2017*. Retrieved from https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/data/yrbs/pdf/trends/2017_suicide_trend_yrbs.pdf
- 4 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2017). Suicide Among Youth. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/healthcommunication/toolstemplates/entertainmenttips/SuicideYouth.html>
- 5 The American Association of Suicidology. (2015, September 10). *Experts Release Consensus Derived List of Warning Signs for Youth Suicide* [Press release]. Retrieved from <http://www.suicidology.org/Portals/14/docs/NSPW/WS%20Press%20Release%20Final.pdf>
- 6 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2017). *Suicide Among Youth*. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/healthcommunication/toolstemplates/entertainmenttips/SuicideYouth.html>
- 7 Gould, M.S., Greenberg, T., Velting, D.M., & Shaffer, D. (2003). Youth suicide risk and preventive interventions: A review of the past 10 years. *J Am Acad Child Adolesc Psychiatry*, 42(4): 386-405.

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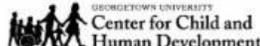
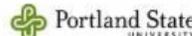
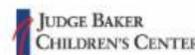


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