

Mental health support: Suicide prevention

We all worry and struggle with our feelings at times. Sometimes those feelings can be a symptom of something more than a bad day. They may be symptoms of a mental illness.

If you're experiencing the following symptoms, consider getting help just as you would for any medical condition:

- Sad or elated
- Anxious
- Depressed
- Overwhelmed
- Fearful
- Disoriented
- Forgetful

Relationships may become difficult. Work seems harder than it used to be. Life may be a struggle. If feelings or symptoms are affecting your life, consider getting help just as you would for any medical condition.

Every 11 minutes

someone in the U.S. dies by suicide.¹

**1 in 5 high
school students**

in the U.S. have seriously
considered suicide.²

**More than 50%
of people**

in the U.S. will be diagnosed with
mental illness during their lifetime.³

**Support is available for you
and your loved ones.**

Visit [Here4TN.com](https://www.here4tn.com) and choose
"Member Benefits" to explore resources.

Experiencing a crisis situation?

If you or someone you care about is struggling,
know that help is available 24 hours a day.

Call or text **988** if you have:⁴

- Thoughts of suicide
- A mental health crisis
- A substance use crisis

The 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline connects you to
caring support from a trained crisis counselor.

There is hope. Call or text **988** today.

Gaining perspective on suicide

Understand that it's not a character flaw to have thoughts of self-harm or a desire to escape mental anguish. Yet in order for you to feel better, you must acknowledge that you need help and reach out to someone.

Know that there are some circumstances or conditions that may increase your risk for suicide. They include drug and alcohol use, depression, a family history of suicide, or the recent suicide or death of a friend or loved one.

Make sure to pay attention to your feelings and reach out for help. There are people around you who care and would welcome the opportunity to help. Suicidal thoughts are usually a serious symptom of a treatable illness. The key to dealing with suicidal thinking is treatment of the underlying illness.

Ways to seek help

- **A psychiatrist or other mental health care professional is an excellent choice.** Suicidal thoughts need to be taken seriously and evaluated carefully. If you are in treatment and are feeling suicidal, you should call your doctor or therapist right away.
- **988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline.** Available 24/7, the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline can connect you with a trained crisis counselor. It's free and confidential.
- **Online.** There is a lot of help available on the internet if you'd rather turn there, but choose your site carefully. Some suicide bulletin boards have little traffic and may not respond very quickly to your needs, although some sites may be excellent in supporting you over time.
- **Other support.** Clergy, family members and friends can be very good support persons, particularly those you trust enough to confide in about your feelings. Friends and family members in particular have an emotional investment in their relationship with you and much to lose if you are successful in taking your own life. Allow them to be there for you when you need it.

Steps you can take⁵

- **Safely store medications.** Ask a friend or family member to store your medications safely, so they cannot be used in a suicide attempt.
- **Keep phone numbers for hotlines** and mental health professionals easily accessible.
- **Pay attention to your moods and feelings** and be on the lookout for a return to persistent thoughts of self-harm. Practice self-observation and recognize when you need support and where you can find it.
- **Remove firearms or other means** of lethal injury from your home, so the means to end your life are not readily at hand.

If you feel that you are in immediate danger of hurting yourself or others, call **911** or your local emergency services immediately.

Or call or text **988** anytime to reach the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline.

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1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Facts about suicide. [cdc.gov/suicide/facts/index.html](https://www.cdc.gov/suicide/facts/index.html). Accessed December 22, 2022.
2. Ivey-Stephenson AZ, Demissie Z, Crosby AE, et al. Suicidal ideation and behaviors among high school students — youth risk behavior survey, United States, 2019. *cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/su/su6901a6.htm?_cid=su6901a6_w*. *MMWR Suppl.* 2020;69(1):47–55. August 21, 2020. Accessed December 22, 2022.
3. CDC. About mental health. [cdc.gov/mentalhealth/learn/index.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/mentalhealth/learn/index.htm). Last reviewed June 28, 2021. Accessed December 22, 2022.
4. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. 988 key messages. [samhsa.gov/find-help/988/key-messages](https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/988/key-messages). Accessed December 22, 2022.
5. Suicide Prevention Resource Center. A comprehensive approach to suicide prevention. [sprc.org/effective-prevention/comprehensive-approach](https://www.sprc.org/effective-prevention/comprehensive-approach). Accessed December 22, 2022.

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