



Health Insights

September 2023

Suicide Prevention and Awareness

There's no single cause for suicide. Suicide most often occurs when stressors and health issues converge to create an experience of hopelessness and despair. Depression is the most common condition associated with suicide, and it is often undiagnosed or untreated. Conditions like depression, anxiety, and substance problems—especially when unaddressed—increase the risk for suicide. Yet it's important to note that most people who actively manage their mental health conditions can engage positively in life.

Who Is at Risk?

Risk factors are characteristics or conditions that increase the chance that a person may try to take their life. People of all ages, genders, and backgrounds can attempt suicide, but some groups are at higher risk than others. Men are more likely than women to die from suicide, but women are more likely than men to attempt suicide.

Several factors can also contribute to the risk of suicide, such as:

- Previous suicide attempt(s)
- History of depression, an eating disorder, or other mental illness
- Alcohol or drug abuse
- Family history of suicide, violence, or abuse
- Physical illness
- Relational, social, occupational, or financial loss
- Feelings of hopelessness
- Impulsive or aggressive tendencies
- Barriers to accessing mental health treatment
- Feeling alone

Warning Signs

Something to look out for when concerned that a person may be suicidal is a change in behavior or the presence of entirely new behaviors. This is of greatest concern if the new or changed behavior is related to a painful event, loss, or change. Most people who take their lives exhibit one or more warning signs, either through what they say or what they do. When a person is thinking about suicide, they will likely display indications, which may include:

- Threats, talk, or writing of suicide or self harm
- Withdrawal from family and friends
- Sudden, excessive and/or uncontrolled rage
- Taking unnecessary risks or exhibiting self-destructive behavior
- Increased alcohol and/or drug use
- Dramatic mood swings

Prevention

If someone you know is threatening suicide, it is important to start a conversation regarding their state of mind. Most of the time, the person will talk willingly. Make sure to listen and express empathy. Do not leave them alone, and if they refuse professional help, see that a parent or trusted friend is informed.

If you are struggling with suicidal thoughts, talk about how you are feeling with someone you trust. Do not be ashamed to admit you need help. The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (988lifeline.org/) is always staffed and ready to listen by calling, texting, or chatting 988.

To learn more about Suicide Prevention and Awareness visit: afsp.org/



Mental Health Moment

What to do When Someone is at Risk

If you think someone is considering suicide, assume you are the only one who will reach out. Here's how to talk to someone who may be struggling with their mental health:

If You're Concerned About Someone

Talk in Private: Listen to their story and let them know you care. Ask directly about suicide, calmly and without judgement. Show understanding and take their concerns seriously. Let them know their life matters to you. That one conversation could save a life.

If a Person Says They're Thinking About Suicide

Take the Person Seriously: Someone considering suicide is experiencing a life-threatening health crisis and may not believe they can be helped. Work with them to keep them safely away from lethal means like firearms and drugs and remind them that they have something worth living for.

Stay with them and call or text 988 the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline. (988lifeline.org/) Be sure to follow up with them after the crisis to see how they're doing.

If You're Struggling

Don't Wait for Someone to Reach Out: Seek mental health treatment or tell your clinician about your suicidal thinking. Treat yourself like you would treat someone else who needs your help.

If a person says they are considering suicide:

- Take the person seriously
- Stay with them
- Help them by removing lethal means
- Call, text or chat the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline: 988 (988lifeline.org/)
- Text TALK to 741741 to text with a trained crisis counselor from the Crisis Text Line for free, 24/7 (www.crisistextline.org/)
- Escort them to mental health services or an emergency room

Dealing with Depression

Depression is a loss of interest in normal activities and feelings of sadness that persist for a long period of time. Depression affects a wide range of people. Common symptoms include the following:

- Decreased energy, fatigue, or feeling "slow"
- Sleep disturbances
- Feelings of guilt, worthlessness, or helplessness
- Thoughts of death or suicide
- Restlessness or irritability
- Excessive crying
- Chronic aches and pains that do not respond to treatment

Other symptoms may inhibit your success at work. Co-workers or supervisors might notice the following:

- Decreased productivity
- Morale problems
- Lack of cooperation
- Safety problems and accidents
- Absenteeism
- Frequent complaints of being constantly tired
- Alcohol and drug abuse

You should seek help if you have the above symptoms for more than two weeks or they are interfering with work or family life. You should also consider:

- Contacting your family physician, as perceived symptoms of depression may be indications of other physical conditions.
- Contacting your employer's HR department or Employee Assistance Program (EAP). These programs offer confidential help for a variety of conditions.
- Discussing options like prescription medication or therapy with your doctor to help restore your well-being.



Summer Squash and Basil Pasta

Ingredient List:

- ¼ cup olive oil
- 8 garlic cloves, thinly sliced
- 2 pounds assorted summer squashes and zucchini, quartered lengthwise, sliced
- Kosher salt
- 1 teaspoon Aleppo-style pepper, plus more for serving
- 12 ounces paccheri, ziti, or other large tube pasta
- 2 ounces Parmesan, grated (about ½ cup), plus more for serving
- 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
- ½ cup basil leaves, divided

Directions:

1. Heat oil in a large skillet over medium. Cook garlic, stirring occasionally, until very lightly browned around the edges, about 4 minutes. Add squash and increase heat to medium high, season with salt. Cook, tossing occasionally, until squash begins to break down. Turn down heat once it begins sticking and continue to cook until the squash is jammy and soft, 12–15 minutes. Toss in 1 tsp. Aleppo-style pepper.
2. Meanwhile, cook pasta in a large pot of boiling salted water, stirring occasionally, until very al dente.
3. Transfer pasta to skillet with squash using a slotted spoon or spider spoon and add ½ cup pasta cooking liquid. Cook pasta, adding 2 oz. Parmesan in stages along with more pasta cooking liquid as needed, until sauce coats pasta and pasta is al dente. Toss in lemon juice and most of the basil.
4. Divide pasta among bowls and top with more Parmesan and Aleppo-style pepper and remaining basil.

Calories (kcal) 550, Fat (g) 21, Saturated Fat (g) 5, Carbohydrates (g) 73, Protein (g) 18

Morocco, C. (2018, August 1). Summer squash and Basil Pasta. Bon Appétit. <https://www.bonappetit.com/recipe/summer-squash-and-basil-pasta>



September Quiz

Suicide Prevention and Awareness

1. What factors can contribute to the risk of suicide?
 - a. Regular exercise and a healthy lifestyle
 - b. Family history of academic achievements
 - c. Previous suicide attempt(s)
 - d. Positive social support network
2. How can you help someone who is threatening suicide?
 - a. Encourage them to keep their feelings to themselves
 - b. Leave them alone and hope they seek professional help on their own
 - c. Start a conversation about their feelings and listen with empathy
 - d. Advise them to rely solely on the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

What to do When Someone is at Risk

3. What is one resource you can use to help someone in crisis?

4. If you think someone is thinking about suicide, assume you are the only one who will _____.

Mental Health Moment

5. What are some common symptoms of depression?
 - a. Increased energy and motivation
 - b. Frequent laughter and joy
 - c. Decreased energy, fatigue, or feeling "slow"
 - d. Enhanced concentration and focus



Healthy Habits Calendar



September 2023 - Suicide Prevention and Awareness

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 Welcome to September! Start the <i>Stop, Hobby Time!</i> Challenge.	2 Social Saturday: Connect with friends or family in a healthy way today.
3	4 Labor Day	5	6 Wellness Wednesday: Do something that will help relieve stress today.	7	8 Fitness Friday: Mix up your workout routine by doing a fun activity like dancing or playing a sport.	9
10 Sleep Sound Sunday: Prioritize your sleep by following a bedtime routine.	11	12 Take-a-Break Tuesday: Schedule a break for yourself today and do something you enjoy.	13	14 Thankful Thursday: Send a thank you note to someone who positively impacted your life.	15	16
17	18 Mindful Monday: Take time to enjoy your meals and pay attention to when you're full or hungry.	19	20 Wellness Wednesday: Take a break from technology to spend time in nature.	21	22 Fitness Friday: Take a dance or cardio exercise class online.	23
24 Self-care Sunday: Write down three things you are grateful for.	25	26 Tasty Tuesday: Try out a new recipe or meal prep for the week.	27	28 Challenge Check in: What hobbies did you try out this month?	29 Fitness Friday: Set a fitness goal for the upcoming month and make plans on how to achieve it.	30



Challenge: Stop, Hobby Time!

On top of working and the busyness that comes with life, it can be hard to find time to try new things. This constant state of “go-go-go” can impact our mental health. Hobbies reduce stress, enhance your well-being, improve social connections, and boost mental health. Trying a new hobby can give you a fresh perspective on life and the world around you.

For the next four weeks, try out a new type of hobby: physical, intellectual, creative, or service-oriented. You can try a new hobby each week, or you can try the same hobby all month. For example, take a walk outside, try learning a new skill, paint in the park, or visit with others. Write down what you did and how it made you feel. You may find something new that is meaningful and enjoyable!

Goal: Try out a new hobby each week

Week 1

Hobby Category: Physical Intellectual Creative Service

Hobby or Activity Name:

How did it make you feel?

Week 2

Hobby Category: Physical Intellectual Creative Service

Hobby or Activity Name:

How did it make you feel?

Week 3

Hobby Category: Physical Intellectual Creative Service

Hobby or Activity Name:

How did it make you feel?

Week 4

Hobby Category: Physical Intellectual Creative Service

Hobby or Activity Name:

How did it make you feel?

Answers to Quiz:

Q1 : c. Previous suicide attempt(s) | Q2: c. Start a conversation about their feelings and listen with empathy

Q3: 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, Crisis text Line, AFSP and more

Q4: reach out | Q5: c. Decreased energy, fatigue, or feeling "slow"