

# Your Concern Connection

From Concern Employee Assistance Program

[www.concernonline.org](http://www.concernonline.org)  
901-458-4000 or 800-445-5011



## Stop Stressing Out about Stress

With all the talk about stress and stress management, it's important to know that much of the stress we experience is not harmful, and serves us in many ways. The stress you feel before taking an exam helps you remain focused so you can do your best. This good stress is also called "eustress," a term coined by Hans Selye, the father of stress theory. Stop stressing about stress. The type of stress to be watchful for is "chronic stress." Chronic stress (ongoing stress experiences that do not let up) can be physically harmful. What it feels like: You have little control over how much stress you feel, how long the stress lasts, and when you'll next experience it. Caregivers are highly prone to chronic stress. If you experience chronic stress, figure out how you will intervene to control it.



## Protect Yourself from Identity Theft

**ID** theft is a growing problem. Here's what's hot right now: Many background check Web sites have information about you—e.g., Truthfinder.com, etc. Thieves acquire this information for free. But that free info is not enough to steal your identity. That comes next—by sending you an apparently foolproof, convincing email that appears to come from a friend—who was hacked. The email asks you to click a link that obtains the missing piece of information. The fix: Don't click a link in an email that comes from a friend until you have verified it is not fraudulent.



## Fight the Stigma of Mental Illness In the Workplace

The stigma of mental illness in the workplace contributes to denial and avoidance of treatment. Some studies have shown stigma contributing to the delay of treatment for up to eight years! That's a lot of needless suffering. Since 25% of employees will eventually have a mental health diagnosis, fighting stigma is crucial. To fight for change, take two powerful steps: 1) Talk about mental wellness just as you would physical wellness. 2) Just as you know to avoid derogatory terms for physical disabilities, also discourage language (crazy, nut-case, whacked-out, etc.) historically asso-



[www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov) [Search: PMC5347358]

## First Sign of Teen Drug Use

**S**chool has started. Will your youngster someday be influenced to experiment with illicit drugs? How could you possibly know? Is there a common first telltale sign? Unfortunately, the fact is that unsuspecting parents may never know. However, the first sign that is usually observed is a sudden change of friends with whom parents or guardians are not familiar or of whom they do not approve. The most powerful, too often unused tool for parents to prevent illicit drug use is communication. Research shows it is dreaded and seldom used by parents, or if used at all, it's a one-shot thing. Best advice: Have the talk.



Learn more: [www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov) [Search PMC3257983]

# When Your Coworker Seems Depressed

You can't play doctor, but something's not right with your coworker. He or she is coming in late, not "caring" as much about the work, putting things off, and not dressing as nicely as they once did. They appear a little absent-minded, unsure of themselves, "scattered" or unorganized, and a little bit isolated or withdrawn from the rest of the group.

Sometimes they are snappy, too—not as pleasant to be around. Although you can't diagnose, you can share your concerns. Listen and encourage him or her to get help. A whopping 23% of employees will suffer from depression and miss work because of it, according to one key study. Getting over depression is *not* an exercise in willpower. It's a neurological disease process often requiring medical intervention to overcome. As a peer, you could have tremendous influence—likely more than a family member with whom the employee possibly engages in conflict. This means it doesn't take much effort to influence a coworker's decision to take action and get help. Simply sharing your observations (in private) and encouraging a coworker to get help could be enough to motivate him or her to do so. Depression left untreated can lead down a chronic path of worsening symptoms. You may help your coworker avoid years of pain as the illness grows worse, and coming to work may be a lot more pleasant for you, too.



## How to Be More Proactive

Are you a proactive employee? Being proactive means acting in anticipation of future problems, needs, or changes. Proactive employees naturally get more stuff done with fewer crises and less work strain. Not being proactive does not mean you don't act or respond to critical issues, but that you may just act later on these things. This means being prompted by a crisis that includes more stress. To be proactive: 1) Pay attention to your gut telling you to act now on what you're facing. 2) Resist the temptation to use procrastination as a way to manage work, causing you to respond daily to only what's urgent. 3) On the job, keep the big picture in mind. Doing so will cause you to feel more energized by work tasks, rather than perceive them as burdens to avoid or postpone.



## Tips for Overcoming Stage Fright

Late-night talk show hosts experience anxiety before they perform, just as you might experience before giving a presentation. They tame this nervousness with practices that reduce intensity so it becomes a tool of success.

You can too. 1) Arrive early and greet members of your audience to feel closer to them. You will feel more familiar with your audience and therefore more in control. 2) Rehearse in private. Four or five times is ideal. Doing so "greases the wheel" and causes your words to flow more easily. Your confidence will grab hold and increase during your presentation. 3) Make eye contact with a few individual attendees while speaking. You will feel closer to your audience, thereby reducing your stress. 4) See your audience as people who really need what you have to offer. This empowers you to be genuine. 5) Breathe slowly and deeply as needed to release tension prior to speaking.



## Foods That Prevent the Afternoon Crash

If that droopy feeling zaps your afternoon performance, examine your diet. The culprit might be lunchtime foods like white bread or white rice—or foods that contain white flour, like pasta. Are you eating enough protein? A protein deficit will affect

your energy. Your body wants protein in order to do its jobs, like metabolizing and repairing. A little bit of unsaturated fat is a good thing to keep your metabolism up. Foods like avocados, nuts, and oily fish, like salmon, are good choices. These also supply energy without the crash. Finally, experiment with smaller, more frequent meals during the day, say every three hours, to see if your energy remains up. Keep a diary, and discover what works for you.



# Preventing Suicide

## What is suicide?

Suicide is death caused by injuring oneself with the intent to die. A suicide attempt is when someone harms themselves with the intent to end their life, but they do not die as a result of their actions.<sup>1</sup>

Suicide is associated with several risk and protective factors, is connected to other forms of injury and violence, and causes serious health and economic consequences. For example, suicide risk is higher among people who have experienced violence, including child abuse, bullying, or sexual violence. Other characteristics associated with suicide include a history of suicide attempts and lack of problem-solving skills. Protective factors like connectedness and easy access to health care buffer individuals from suicidal thoughts and behavior.<sup>2</sup>

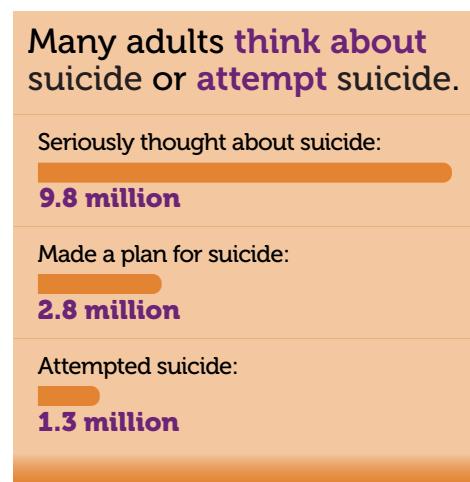
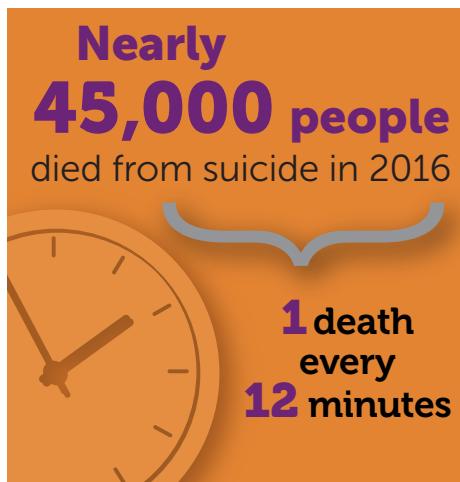
By using a public health approach that addresses risk and protective factors for multiple types of violence, suicide and other forms of violence can be prevented.<sup>2</sup>

## How big is the problem?

**Suicide is a large and growing public health problem.** Suicide is the 10th leading cause of death in the United States.<sup>3</sup> It was responsible for nearly 45,000 deaths in 2016, with approximately one death every 12 minutes.<sup>3</sup> Many more people think about or attempt suicide and survive. In 2016, 9.8 million American adults seriously thought about suicide, 2.8 million made a plan, and 1.3 million attempted suicide.<sup>4</sup>

**Suicide affects all ages.** Suicide is a problem throughout the life span. It is the second leading cause of death for people 10 to 34 years of age, the fourth leading cause among people 35 to 54 years of age, and the eighth leading cause among people 55 to 64 years of age.<sup>3</sup>

**Some groups have higher rates of suicide than others.** Suicide rates vary by race/ethnicity, age, and other population characteristics, with the highest rates across the life span occurring among non-Hispanic American Indian/Alaska Native and non-Hispanic White populations.<sup>5</sup> Other Americans disproportionately impacted by suicide include Veterans and other military personnel and workers in certain occupational groups. Sexual minority youth bear a large burden as well, and experience increased suicidal ideation and behavior compared to their non-sexual minority peers.<sup>5</sup>



## What are the consequences?

Suicide, by definition, is fatal. Suicide also affects the health of others and the community. When people die by suicide, their family and friends often experience shock, anger, guilt, and depression. The economic toll of suicide on society is immense as well. Suicides and suicide attempts cost the nation approximately \$70 billion per year in lifetime medical and work-loss costs alone.<sup>3</sup>

People who attempt suicide and survive may experience serious injuries, such as broken bones or organ failure. These injuries can have long-term effects on their health. People who survive suicide attempts can also have depression and other mental health problems.<sup>6</sup>

In addition to the number of people who are injured or die, many other people are impacted by knowing someone who dies or by personally experiencing suicidal thoughts.<sup>6</sup> Additionally, being a survivor or someone with lived experience increases one's risk of suicide.

## How can we prevent suicide?

CDC developed a technical package that provides information on the best available evidence for suicide prevention. The technical package can be used to inform a comprehensive, multi-level and multi-sectoral approach within communities and states. It includes strategies to prevent suicide in the first place, by decreasing suicide risk factors and increasing protective factors. Strategies range from a focus on the whole population regardless of risk to strategies designed to support people at highest risk. Importantly, this technical package extends typical prevention strategies to approaches that go beyond individual behavior change to better address factors impacting communities and populations more broadly.



### Strengthen economic supports

- Strengthen household financial security
- Housing stabilization policies



### Strengthen access and delivery of suicide care

- Coverage of mental health conditions in health insurance policies
- Reduce provider shortages in underserved areas
- Safer suicide care through system change



### Create protective environments

- Reduce access to lethal means among persons at risk of suicide
- Organizational policies and culture
- Community-based policies to reduce excessive alcohol use



### Promote connectedness

- Peer norm programs
- Community engagement activities



### Teach coping and problem-solving skills

- Social-emotional learning programs
- Parenting skill and family relationship programs



### Identify and support people at risk

- Gatekeeper training
- Crisis intervention
- Treatment for people at risk of suicide
- Treatment to prevent re-attempts

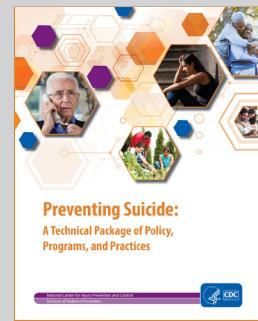


### Lessen harms and prevent future risk

- Postvention
- Safe reporting and messaging about suicide

## Preventing Suicide: A Technical Package of Policy, Programs, and Practices

A **technical package** is a collection of strategies based on the best available evidence to prevent or reduce public health problems. The **strategy** lays out the direction and actions to prevent suicide. The **approaches** include the specific ways to advance the strategy through programs, policies and practices. The **evidence** to support each of the approaches to preventing suicide and associated risk factors is also included.



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