

**Frequently Asked Questions About Suicide**

1. **What leads people to suicide?**

Suicide prevention is mental health. It is estimated that about 60% of people who die by suicide have had a mental illness. Suicidal behavior is most often related to a mood disorder like depression and/or to substance use disorder.

Suicide is more likely when people experience stressful events such as divorce, job loss, and legal problems.

Younger people who kill themselves often have a substance use disorder in addition to depression.

1. **Is suicide a concern in Idaho?**

For many years, Idaho has consistently ranked among the states with the highest suicide rates. In 2016, Idaho had the 8th highest suicide rate in the U.S., 50% higher than the national average. Suicide is the **2nd leading cause of death for Idahoans** ages 15-34 and for men up to 44.

Between 2012-2016, 105 Idaho youth, age 6-18, died by suicide, and 27 of those children were 14 or younger. In that same time period, approximately 7,100 adults age 18 and older attempted suicide in Idaho. [[1]](#endnote-1)

1. **What are some signs that someone is suicidal?**

People often signal that they need help in ways that are deliberate, and sometimes they do so unconsciously, in an instinctual call for rescue. Some people will consciously hide their suicidal ideation, so warning signs may not be apparent. The most important thing is to have a conversation with the person you are concerned about. Don’t be afraid to ask them directly if they are feeling suicidal, and be prepared to refer them to help.

These are typical warning signs often exhibited by people who are feeling suicidal:

* Withdrawing from friends and family
* Loss of interest in usual activities
* Showing signs of sadness, hopelessness, helplessness, irritability
* Changes in appetite, weight, behavior, activities or sleep
* Loss of energy
* Negative self-comments
* Suicidal thoughts or fantasies
* Sudden change from extreme depression to being “at peace,” which may indicate they’ve made the decision to kill themselves
* Talking or writing about suicide
* Previous attempts
* Giving away possessions
* Sudden interest in personal wills or life insurance
* Resolving past conflicts

People are at an especially acute risk for suicide if they are highly agitated and have formed a plan with the capacity to complete it.

1. **Will asking someone if they’re suicidal encourage them to make attempts?**

No. This is a common misconception, but the reality is that sharing fears helps to minimize them. If you need help talking to someone about suicide, there are local and national resources:

* Idaho Suicide Prevention Hotline, text or call 208-398-HELP (4357)
* National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 800-273-TALK (8255)

1. Idaho Department of Health and Welfare, Division of Public Health [↑](#endnote-ref-1)