

Suicide Awareness and Prevention

Risk Factors

These are some characteristics or conditions that increase the chance a person may attempt suicide. Risk increases as more factors are present. Meet with a mental health professional to help with a wellness plan.

Health/Personal Factors

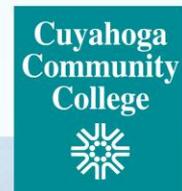
- Mental health conditions
 - Depression
 - Bipolar (manic-depressive) disorder
 - Schizophrenia
 - Borderline or antisocial personality disorder
 - Conduct disorder
 - Psychotic disorders, or psychotic symptoms in the context of any disorder
 - Anxiety disorders
 - Substance abuse disorders
- Serious health condition or pain
- Identifying as LGBTQ+
- Military veteran
- Lack of healthcare, especially mental health/substance abuse treatment

Environmental Factors

- *Stressful life events:* death, job loss, legal issues, finances, school, sexual assault, relationship violence, relationship/friendship issues, public shaming
- *Prolonged stress factors:* harassment, bullying, relationship problems, unemployment
- Access to lethal means (e.g., firearms and drugs)
- Exposure to another person's suicide, or to graphic or sensationalized accounts of suicide

Historical/Cultural Factors

- Previous suicide attempts
- Family history of suicide attempts
- Cultural and religious beliefs, such as the belief that suicide is a noble resolution of a personal dilemma



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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 sharpest 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.

Talks or writes about:

- Wanting to die
- Killing oneself
- Being a burden to others
- Feeling trapped
- Experiencing unbearable pain
- Having no reason to live
- Being hopeless

Behavior changes:

- Begins or increases alcohol or drug use
- Looking for a way to die (searching online for means/materials, buying a gun)
- Acting recklessly
- Withdrawing from activities
- Isolating from others
- Sleeping too much/little
- Visiting or calling people to say goodbye
- Giving away prized possessions
- Aggression

Mood:

- Depression
- Loss of interest
- Rage
- Irritability
- Humiliation
- Anxiety
- Hopeless
- Different than usual



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Symptoms

The following are some symptoms you might observe that may be indicative of someone who needs mental health assistance. The more symptoms present, the greater the urgency the person needs professional help. If either of the “*” symptoms are present, seek immediate help from police or 911.

- Marked changes in behavior
- Decline in personal hygiene
- Isolation from others
- *Classroom behavior changes:* excessive absence/tardiness, change in performance/ action, agitated, low focus, sleeping
- Talks about feeling anxious or depressed
- Makes comments about feeling worthless and that things are hopeless
- *Exhibits symptoms of stress:* headaches, nausea, appetite change, or inability to sleep
- Exhibits signs of alcohol or drug abuse, or begins use
- *Traumatic changes in personal relationships:* break-up with a significant other, abuse, or death in the family
- Overly concerned about weight or body image
- Exhibits disorientation or bizarre behavior
- Exhibits paranoid thoughts
- Becomes verbally abusive or physically violent
- Manifests a sudden unwillingness to communicate
- Makes references to suicide verbally or in writing*
- Threatens bodily harm to others*

***References to suicide or homicide:** ALL suicidal and homicidal threats are to be taken seriously. No matter the context, someone who talks about attempting suicide is at risk and needs to be evaluated by a mental health professional immediately. Threats against others also demand an immediate response. In those instances, [Tri-C Department of Public Safety](#) (216-987-4911) should be the first contact to ensure the safety of those involved and determine the appropriate course of action.

