



SUICIDE PREVENTION

TOOLKIT

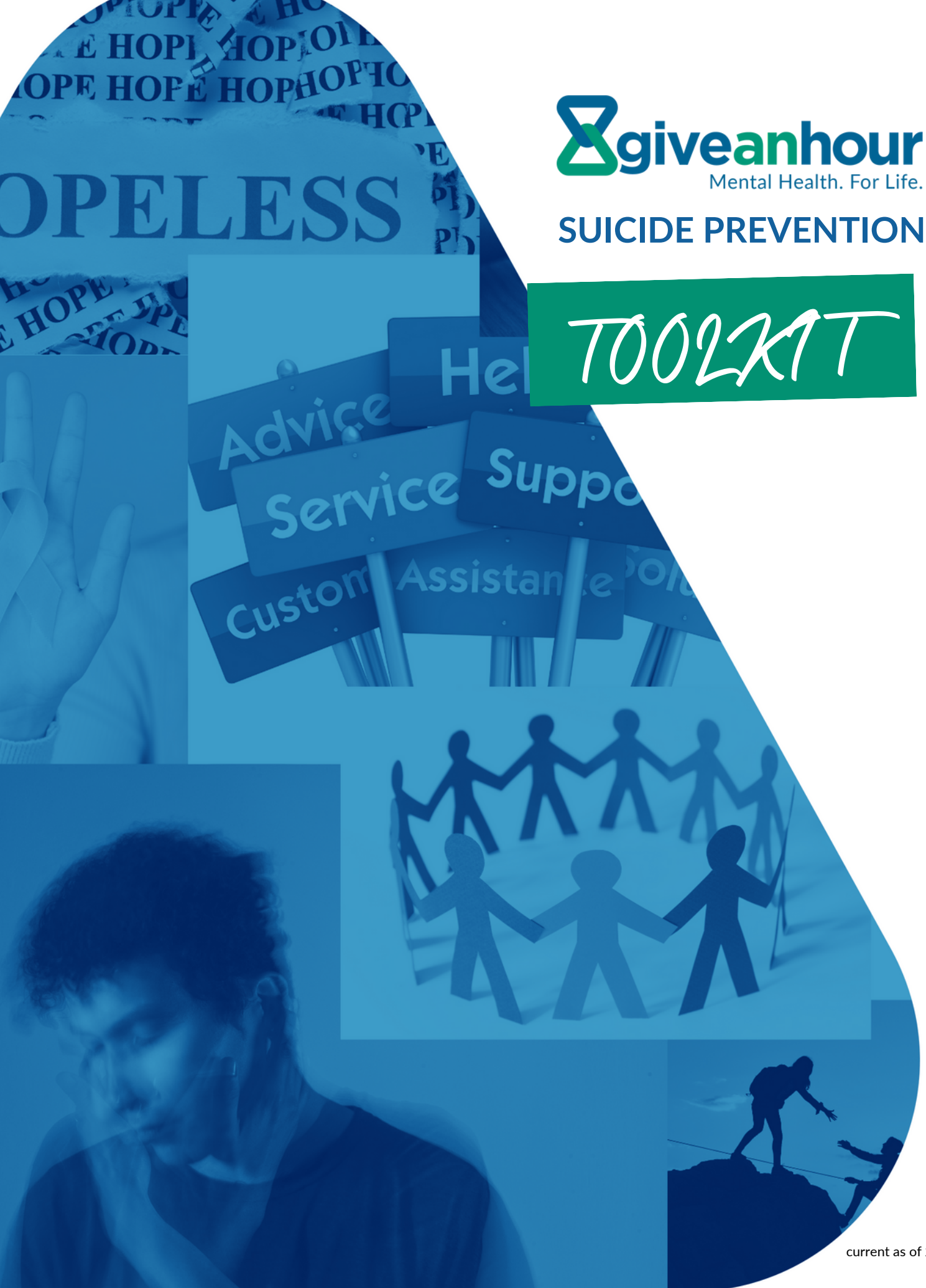


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September is Suicide Prevention Month



World
Mental Health
DAY
OCTOBER 10

21% of adults are experiencing a mental illness (50 Million Adults)



In the U.S. there are 350 People to every ONE mental health provider



4.8% of adults report serious thoughts of suicide (12 Million Adults)



Suicide is the leading cause of death in 15-49 year olds



Statistics: Mental Health America 2023

Global Significance:

- Suicide is a pressing global public health concern, as highlighted by the World Health Organization (WHO).
- Over 700,000 people die by suicide each year worldwide.

We All Have Mental Health!

29% of Americans have been diagnosed with depression during their lifetime

Risk Factors to Be Aware Of:

- Mental health conditions: Depression, bipolar disorder, and schizophrenia significantly elevate the risk.
- Substance abuse, prior suicide attempts, a family history of suicide, and traumatic experiences are other crucial risk factors.



Warning Signs of Suicide

INTERVENTION MATTERS

- Talking about wanting to end one's life.
- Expressions of hopelessness or feeling trapped.
- Unusual behavior such as giving away possessions.
- Withdrawing from social circles.
- Exhibiting extreme mood swings.

SUICIDE PREVENTION

Get Involved with Give an Hour

In the U.S., suicide has tragically risen to become the 9th leading cause of death, with over 48,000 individuals succumbing to it in 2021. That's a staggering one person every 11 minutes. The scope of the issue goes beyond these figures; 12.3 million people seriously contemplated suicide, 3.5 million formulated a plan, and 1.7 million made an actual attempt. Every September, organizations unite to amplify awareness about suicide prevention, champion mental health legislation, and ensure that support and assistance are readily available for those who are emotionally suffering.

[CDC](#) as of May 2023



FIND HELP

- If you recognize that you or someone in your life is suffering, now what? Print out our resource on [How to Find Care](#).
- For Our Military Community Active-duty military, veterans, and their families have access to [Give an Hour's no-cost counseling here](#).

VOLUNTEER TO PROVIDE HELP AND BE A MENTAL HEALTH ADVOCATE

- Mental Health Professionals: [Join our network](#) to partake in diverse programs dedicated to mental health education and services.
- Wellness Ambassadors: [Be a beacon of hope and health in your community](#). As an ambassador, you'll be equipped with resources to promote self-care and community wellbeing. No need for expertise; just an advocate spirit.

DONATE TO GIVE AN HOUR

- Your kind donations drive our mission to redefine mental health culture. With your support, we aim to ensure that everyone can get the aid they need. [Donate Now](#).

Wellness Ambassadors

At the heart of every community are its leaders, those who set the tone, establish standards, and guide others towards better paths. Give an Hour's Wellness Ambassadors are precisely these figures, standing out not by titles but by the genuine concern and action they take towards mental health and emotional well-being. These ambassadors, while not mental health experts, are the much-needed bridges connecting the community with essential resources and knowledge. They symbolize a proactive approach to mental health, encouraging dialogues, and fostering an environment where seeking help is normalized.



Who Can Become a Wellness Ambassador?

- **Inclusive Leadership:** From employers to employees, teachers to students, parents to children—anyone with a drive to make a difference is welcome.
- **Valuing Wellbeing:** It's essential to hold mental health and emotional well-being in high regard.

How to Get Started?

- **Sign Up:** Begin your journey by visiting www.giveanhour.org/wellnessambassadors
- **Stay Connected:** Keep an eye on your inbox for monthly emails, updating you with ways to positively impact your community and acquainting you with Give an Hour's initiatives and opportunities.
- **Join our online community:** Dive in and meet other wellness ambassadors, network, share ideas, and collaborate.

What Does a Wellness Ambassador Do?

- **Flexible Involvement:** Choose your level of involvement based on your comfort and availability.
- **Lead Proactively:** Prioritize your own mental health to show others it's essential.
- **Catalyze Conversations:** Share invaluable tools and resources with your community, and stimulate discussions about mental health.

Benefits of Being an Ambassador:

- **Guidance:** Regular insights on how to advocate for mental health in day-to-day life.
- **Resources:** Access to Give an Hour's tools and resources tailored for community leaders.
- **Exclusive Invites:** Get early invitations to Give an Hour events, giving you a front-row seat to impactful initiatives.
- **Community Building:** Engage with a vibrant community of like-minded volunteers who share your dedication and passion.

HOW TO TALK ABOUT SUICIDE

When someone we care about might be thinking about suicide, it's scary. We often don't know how to start the conversation, even though we know it's important. This guide is here to help. It's a resource to show you how to talk with the people in your life who might be going through a tough time, how to bring up the topic of suicide in a caring way, and how to guide them towards getting some help.



» Create a Safe Space

- Choose a private, calm setting.
- Assure them that you are there to listen, and that this is a safe space to share.

» Start the Conversation

- Start with general feelings before addressing suicide directly. "I've noticed you're not quite yourself lately, you don't seem as happy."
- Ask open-ended questions like "How have you been feeling lately?"
- Be prepared for various emotional responses, including denial or anger.

» Actively Listen

- Nod, maintain eye contact, and use verbal cues like "I see" to show understanding.
- Allow them to speak freely without interruption.

» Respond with Empathy

- Respond with phrases like "I'm here for you" or "That sounds really tough."
- Offer reassurance but avoid making promises you can't keep.
- Maintain a gentle and comfortable tone.

» Seek Support

- Ask them who else might be able to help...a pastor, friend, family member.
- If in doubt, don't wait, call 988

TALKING ABOUT SUICIDE SAVES LIVES!

Asking someone directly about suicidal intent lowers anxiety, opens communication, and lowers the risk of an impulsive act.

WHAT TO AVOID!

Don't say, "I Understand"

Unless you really do...

Don't Judge

- Avoid statements like "Just snap out of it" or "It's not that bad."
- Instead, reflect their feelings: "It sounds like you've been feeling overwhelmed."
- Ask them to make a pact not to act, "Can you come with me to get some help?"

THE WARNING SIGNS OF SUICIDE

Recognizing the signs is the first step in prevention. If someone you know exhibits the following signs, they may be at risk. Learn these signs for yourself and others.



What to Look For:

Verbal Expressions:

- Talking about wanting to die or harm oneself
- Expressing feelings of hopelessness or having no purpose.

Visual Signs:

- Poor Self-Care, not caring about appearance
- Increased isolation

Behavioral Signs:

- Withdrawing from friends, family, and activities
- Giving away prized possessions or making final arrangements
- Increased use of alcohol or drugs
- Aggressive or reckless behavior
- Mood Changes: Prolonged sadness, irritability, or sudden improvement after being down.

What To Do...

Don't Be Afraid To Ask: If you think someone might be suicidal, ask them directly, "Are you thinking of harming yourself?" It won't put the idea in their head, and it shows you care.

Stay Calm And Listen: If someone says they are suicidal, listen without judgment, and let them know you care.

Keep Them Safe: If someone admits they are thinking about suicide, ensure they are not left alone. Remove any means of suicide if possible.

Connect Them With Professional Help: Encourage them to see a mental health professional, counselor, or primary care provider, or to go to the emergency room. You can also connect them with a helpline.

Follow Up: Check in with them after your initial conversation. A simple message or call can make a big difference.

What Someone Might Say Direct and Indirect Verbal Cues:

"I can't see a way out."

"I just want the pain to stop."

"I wish I were dead."

"It would be better if I weren't here."

"People would be better off without me."

Crisis Lines

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK (1-800-273-8255)

Crisis Text Line: Text "HELLO" to 741741

Remember, your intervention might save a life.
Always take signs of suicide seriously.

Know the *Five* Signs of Emotional Suffering



Personality
Changes



Uncharacteristically
angry, anxious,
agitated, or moody



Withdrawal or
isolation from
other people



May neglect self-
care & engage in
risky behavior



Overcome with
hopelessness &
overwhelmed by
circumstances

THESE ARE FIVE SIGNS THAT MAY MEAN SOMEONE IS IN
EMOTIONAL PAIN & MIGHT NEED HELP.



#giveanhour

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The *Five* Signs of Emotional Suffering

It's important to understand that someone can be emotionally suffering without necessarily exhibiting signs of suicidal thoughts or intentions. Often, our friends, neighbors, co-workers, and family members might be grappling with emotional pain without recognizing the symptoms or feeling comfortable enough to ask for help. If you observe signs of distress or hopelessness in someone, it's a clear warning that they might be in deep emotional turmoil. Recognizing these signs and reaching out can make a world of difference.

Here are five signs that may indicate someone is emotionally suffering and could benefit from help:



PERSONALITY CHANGES

You may notice sudden or gradual changes in the way that someone typically behaves. People in this situation may behave in ways that don't seem to fit their values, or the person may just seem different.



UNCHARACTERISTICALLY ANGRY, ANXIOUS, AGITATED, OR MOODY

You may notice the person has more frequent problems controlling his or her temper and seems irritable or unable to calm down. People in more extreme situations of this kind may be unable to sleep or may explode in anger at a minor problem.



WITHDRAWAL OR ISOLATION FROM OTHER PEOPLE

Someone who used to be socially engaged may pull away from family and friends and stop taking part in activities that used to be enjoyable. In more severe cases the person may start failing to make it to work or school. Not to be confused with the behavior of someone who is more introverted, this sign is marked by a change in a person's typical sociability, as when someone pulls away from the social support typically available.



MAY NEGLECT SELF-CARE AND ENGAGE IN RISKY BEHAVIOR

You may notice a change in the person's level of personal care or an act of poor judgment. For instance, someone may let personal hygiene deteriorate, or the person may start abusing alcohol or illicit substances or engaging in other self-destructive behavior that may alienate loved ones.



OVERCOME WITH HOPELESSNESS AND OVERWHELMED BY CIRCUMSTANCES

Have you noticed someone who used to be optimistic and now can't find anything to be hopeful about? That person may be suffering from extreme or prolonged grief, or feelings of worthlessness or guilt. People in this situation may say that the world would be better off without them, suggesting suicidal thinking.

SUICIDE

MYTHS VS FACTS

Statistics: NAMI

MYTH: Those who talk about suicide don't do it.



FACT: People who talk about suicide may try, or even complete, an act of self-destruction.

MYTH: Confronting a person about suicide will only make increase the risk of suicide.



FACT: Asking someone directly about suicidal intent lowers the risk of an impulsive act.

MYTH: Once a person decides to complete suicide, there is nothing you can do to stop them.



FACT: Suicide is preventable. Almost any positive action may save a life.

MYTH: Suicidal people keep their plans to themselves.



FACT: Most suicidal people communicate their intent preceding their attempt.

MYTH: No one can stop a suicide, it is inevitable.



FACT: If someone is in a crisis and gets help, their suicide may be preventable.

MYTH: Only experts can prevent suicide.



FACT: Anyone can help prevent the tragedy of suicide.

ONLINE SAFETY FOR SUICIDE PREVENTION

The digital world connects us, offering support, information, and community. But when it comes to mental health and suicide prevention, online spaces can be both a lifeline and a potential risk. Here's a quick guide on ensuring online safety in the context of suicide prevention.



Recognize Warning Signs

- **Distressing Posts:** Content indicating feelings of hopelessness, isolation, or extreme distress.
- **Direct Statements:** Expressions about wanting to die or no longer be a burden.
- **Behavioral Clues:** Sharing of self-harming images, goodbyes, or giving away possessions.

Engage with Empathy

- **Respond Privately:** If you feel comfortable and know the person, you can direct message them and share your concern.
- **Avoid Public Threads:** Public discussions can sometimes lead to unintended negative consequences.
- **Stay Calm:** Ensure your response is non-judgmental, calm, and supportive.

Encourage Professional Help

- **Provide Resources:** Share helplines like the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK (8255).
- **Recommend Trusted Websites:** Direct them to reliable mental health resources, such as Give an Hour or AFSP.
- **Avoid Making Promises:** While your intention is to help, avoid making promises that you cannot keep.

Report to Platform Moderators

- **Use Reporting Tools:** Most social media platforms have reporting tools for concerning content. Utilize them.
- **Describe Urgency:** In your report, specify if there's an immediate threat of self-harm or suicide.

Educate Yourself

- **Stay Updated:** Platforms change their safety and reporting protocols. Regularly update yourself on the latest measures.
- **Join Online Training:** Enroll in online courses focused on suicide prevention, like those offered by QPR or ASIST.
- **Follow Reputable Organizations:** Accounts from trusted mental health organizations often share tips, news, and updates on this topic.

Together We Can Promote Positive Online Spaces

Share Uplifting Content: Stories of hope, recovery, and resilience can be impactful.

Support Forums: Participate in or promote safe online forums where people can share their feelings without judgment.

Validate Emotions: Let individuals know that it's okay to feel what they're feeling, but there's always hope and help available.