

# THE DAILY ARDMOREITE

Suicide statistics

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## Suicide Prevention: What we can do

Each year, suicide accounts for more than 37,000 deaths in the United States. The loss of someone to suicide resonates among family, friends, coworkers, and others in the community; it has been estimated that for each person who commits suicide, 5 to 10 other people are severely affected by the loss. Family and friends may experience a range of painful emotions, such as shock, anger, guilt, and depression. Suicide

can occur across demographics, but certain groups are more at risk than the general population. Problems with intimate partner relationships and mental and physical health problems are factors that have been associated with the occurrence of suicide.

Suicide is devastating, but there are resources and information available to help prevent it. Learn more to be the one who makes a difference.

### Who is at higher risk of suicide?

- Teenagers and young adults: Suicide is the third leading cause of death for 15 to 24 year olds.
- Military Service Members: On average, a member of the Armed Forces commits suicide every 36 hours.
- Veterans: Suicide is the cause of death of an estimated 18 U.S. veterans each day.
- American Indians/Alaskan Natives: Rates of suicide among American Indian/Alaskan Natives ages 15 to 34 are almost double the national average for that age group.
- Gay, lesbian and bisexual youth: Gay, lesbian, and bisexual adolescents in grades 7 through 12 are more than twice as likely to attempt suicide as heterosexuals within the same age range.
- Latina girls: Latina girls between the ages of 12 and 17 have the highest rate of suicide attempts among all adolescent ethnic groups.

### What Communities Can Do

Families, Friends, Educators, Coworkers and Other Community Members

Learn and recognize the warning signs of suicide, including:

- Talking about: wanting to die or kill oneself, being a burden to others, feeling hopeless or having no reason to live, or feeling trapped or in unbearable pain.
- Looking for a way to kill oneself, such as searching online or buying a gun.
- Behaving recklessly.
- Withdrawing or feeling isolated, displaying extreme mood swings, or increasing the use of alcohol or drugs.
- Showing rage or talking about seeking revenge, acting anxious or agitated, or sleeping too little or too much.

*You can help someone who is considering suicide by taking one or more of the following steps:*

- Listen and don't debate whether suicide is right or wrong. Allow the person in need to express his or her feelings without passing judgment or acting shocked.
- Be direct and get involved. Talk openly and matter-of-factly, showing interest and support for the person at risk.
- Don't be sworn to secrecy—seek support and professional help for the person at risk.
- Offer hope that alternatives are available.

- Get help from people or agencies that specialize in crisis intervention and suicide prevention.
- Seek confidential help, available 24 hours a day, through the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK (8255), a toll-free service funded by SAMHSA.

#### *Community Coalitions and Organizations*

- Meet with local officials and ask them to support suicide prevention in the community and statewide.
- Facilitate trainings on different topics, such as intervention skills, for key stakeholders and community members.
- Provide informational materials to schools or at local events.

#### *School Administrators*

- Help prevent suicide by establishing comprehensive crisis plans, and school-based prevention and anti-bullying programs.

#### *Parents and Caregivers*

- Ask your child's friends and teachers if you have concerns about your child's behavior. Spend at least 15 minutes per day listening and talking to your children. Ask about their concerns, and express what you've heard back to them to make sure you understand each other.

This information is being brought to you by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration and the Carter County Turning Point Substance Abuse Committee as part of National Prevention Week 2012. Please visit their facebook page at [www.facebook.com/CarterCountySubstanceAbusePrevention](http://www.facebook.com/CarterCountySubstanceAbusePrevention) or contact Gwynn Busby, [gbusby@wmpn.org](mailto:gbusby@wmpn.org).