

'There is but one philosophic problem, and that is suicide. The task of man is to respond to life's apparent meaninglessness, despair, and its absurd quality - Camus, The Myth of Sisyphus

"Living is not good, but living well. The wise man, therefore lives as well as he should, not as long as he can He will always think of life in terms of quality, not quantity Dying early or late is of no consequence, dying well is Even if it is true that, while there is life there is hope, life is not to be bought at any cost." - Seneca

Suicide is painless It brings on many changes And I can take or leave it If I please And you can do the same If you please - Theme from M.A.S.H.

I. STATISTICS

- A. Women attempt suicide 4 times more than men.
Men complete suicide 4 times more than women.
- B. Peak time is Spring and Christmas
- C. Most likely to commit suicide
depressed men, 40+, single or divorced, without close friends, living alone, users of alcohol or drugs.
- D. 10,000 Attempt suicide a day worldwide. (Suicide rates have increased radically since 2020)
- E. Who has more suicides? Sweden ranked highest (pre 1984 statistic)
- F. For young people, 1 dies every 90 minutes or 16⁴ times a day, 6,000 a year.
Rate is up 41% in 10 years and 264% since 1950 (to age 24)
Rate for 25-35 years is up 150%
- G. There are 60-70 persons who succeed a day. About 23,000 per year

(CDC Statistics 2022 - 49,000 died by suicide in the U.S.A - 1 death every 11 minutes. 13.2 million seriously thought about suicide. 3.8 million made plans for suicide. 1.6 million attempted it. Rates increased 37% between 2000-2018, decreased 5% between 2018-2020, then returned to peak 2022 +.

*Highest rates among American Indian / natives (27.1); non-hispanic Whites (17.6), Pacific Islanders (14.3), Multi-racial (10;5); black (9), Hispanic (8.1), Asian (6.9). Rates per 100,000 population Males were ~ 4 times higher than females. Males are ~50% of population, but 80% of suicides Highest rates (per 100,000 population). 85+ (23); 75-84 (20.3); 65-74 (16); 55-64 (18.7); 45-64 (19.2); 35-44 (18.7); 25-34 (19), 15-24 (13.6); 10-14 (2.4)
Methods: Firearms (55%); Suffocation (25%); Poisoning (12%); other (8%)*

II BIBLICAL EXAMPLES

- A. Judges 16:29, 30 - Samson (caused destruction of Temple of Dagon while inside)
- B. 1 Sam. 31:4-5; 1 Chron. 10:4-5 - Saul (by sword after being injured in battle)
- C. 2 Sam 17:23 - Ahithophel - (strangled himself)
- D. I Kings 16:18 - Zimri (Burned house he was in)
- E. Matt. 27:5; Acts 1:18 - Judas (hanged himself)
- F. Judges 9:50-54 - Abimelech (after being injured, he commanded one of his soldiers to kill him)

III . ETHICAL ARGUMENTS AGAINST

- A. Exodus 20:13 - *"You shall not murder."* Suicide is self murder. Includes willful neglect, et.
- B. Matthew 12:39 - *Love your neighbor as yourself.* Suicide militates against self
- C. 1 Samuel 31:4 - Saul's armor bearer would not "mercy kill" Saul due to conscience's sake
- D. Phil 2:13 - *For it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.*
God is at work in all circumstances including those that might make you think you were better off dead (See Job)

IV. SECULAR CONSIDERATIONS

- A. It is an anti-rational act that lacks a true rational. Giesler.
It is an act of freedom that destroys all other acts of freedom
- B. Suicide is not self-interest, it is self-hate so those who say it is best for them are being irrational.
(Or is it an act of self-love in the attempt to remove undesired pain regardless of its consequences to others? It is a twisted rationality based on false and foolish premises)

V. REASONS FOR SUICIDE

- A. Person who wrongly takes upon themselves the responsibility to determine the outcome of someone's life. - (make someone pay be guilt for your suicide)
- B. Attempt to atone for wrong doing.
- C. Escape intolerable situations.
- D. Wish to make people pay for hurting me.
- E. Wish to find "peace" or a better life.
- F. Desire to join loved one's.
- G. The fun of it.
- H. Masochism-torture ending in death.

VI. ELEMENTS CRUCIAL IN COUNSELING

- A. He needs to feel something is being done to help.
- B. He must see you as an authority figure.
- C. Be loving but not patronizing.

Myths About Suicide

1. Suicide and attempted suicide are in the same class of behavior.
2. Suicide is a problem of a specific class of people.
3. People who talk about suicide don't commit suicide. (8 out of 10 will try)
4. Once a person is suicidal, he is suicidal forever.
5. Suicide is inherited or runs in families.
6. If a person is a Christian, he will not commit suicide.
7. Suicide and depression are synonymous.
8. Improvement after a suicidal crisis means that the risk of suicide is over. (Most suicides happen 3 months after the beginning of improvement)
9. Suicides happen suddenly

SUICIDAL INTENTION

1. The Suicidal Attempt
2. The Suicidal Threat
3. The Suicidal Hint
4. Suicidal Activity
5. Suicidal Symptoms
6. Recent Crisis

Suicide Evaluation Checklist

Verbal

- Open talk of suicide
- Talk of not being present in the near future
- Questions about suicide
- No longer talking to counselor

Behavioral

- Severe depression (including apathy, insomnia)
- Sudden improvement in mental attitude
- Guilt, Shame, embarrassment
- Feelings of hostility, revenge
- Tension and anxiety
- Poor judgment
- Knowledge of available methods
- Clearly thought-out plans
- Proposed method available (gun, drugs, etc.)
- Giving away possessions
- Buying or updating insurance
- Paying long-standing bills
- Putting personal affairs in order

Descriptive

- Male
- Over 40
- One or more almost successful past attempts
- Sudden, first-time decisions to kill self

Situational

- Loss of loved person by death, divorce,

separation

- Loss of money, prestige, job (including retirement)
- Sickness, serious illness, surgery, accident, loss of limb
- Threat of criminal prosecution
- Change(s) in life situation
- Failure of counseling
- Success, promotion, increased responsibilities

Symptomatic

- Feelings of hopelessness
- Dissatisfaction
- Confused thinking
- Tendency to complain
- Defiant attitude
- Drug or drinking problem
- Inability to control impulses

Resources

- No sources of support (friends, relatives, etc.)
- Family, friends available, but unwilling to help
- No church or community contact
- Living alone

STEPS IN HELPING THE SUICIDAL PERSON

Step 1: Establish a relationship, maintain contact with the person, establish rapport, and obtain information.

Step 2: Identify and clarify the problem.

Step 3: Evaluate the suicidal potential or lethality.

1. Age and sex
2. History of the suicidal behavior
3. Evaluate the suicide plan
 - a. How lethal is it?
 - b. How available is it?
 - c. How specific is the plan?
4. Stress
5. Symptoms
6. Resources
7. Life style
8. Communication with others
9. Medical stability

Step 4: Formulate a plan to help the caller.

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