

- Suicide is the ninth-leading cause of death (2003 data) in Tennessee, claiming over 750 lives per year. Roughly 100 of these are between the age of 10-24—suicide is the third-leading cause of death within this age group.
- Nationally, suicide rates among youth (ages 15-24) have increased more than 200% in the last fifty years.
- The suicide rate is higher for the elderly (ages 85+) than for any other age group.
- Suicide is preventable. Most suicidal people desperately want to live; they are just unable to see alternatives to their problems.
- Most suicidal people give definite warning signals of their suicidal intentions, but others are often unaware of the significance of these warnings or unsure what to do about them.
- Talking about suicide does not cause someone to become suicidal.
- Four times more men than women kill themselves, but three times more women than men attempt suicide.
- Firearms are the most common method of suicide regardless of sex and race.
- Suicide cuts across ethnic, economic, social and age boundaries.
- Surviving family members not only suffer the loss of a loved one to suicide, but are also themselves at higher risk of suicide and emotional problems.

THE LINKS BETWEEN DEPRESSION AND SUICIDE

- Major depression is the psychiatric diagnosis most commonly associated with suicide.
- About two-thirds people who die by suicide are clinically depressed at the time of their deaths.
- Statistically, one out of every sixteen people who are diagnosed with depression (about seven out of every 100 diagnosed males and one out of every hundred diagnosed females) will eventually die by suicide.
- The risk of suicide in people with major depression is about 20 times that of the general population.
- People who have had multiple episodes of depression are at greater risk for suicide than those who have had one episode.
- People who have a dependence on alcohol or drugs in addition to being depressed are at greater risk for suicide.
- People who are depressed and exhibit the following symptoms are at particular risk for suicide:
 1. Extreme hopelessness
 2. A lack of interest in activities that were previously pleasurable
 3. Heightened anxiety and/or panic attacks
 4. Global insomnia
 5. Talk about suicide or a prior history of attempts/acts
 6. Irritability and agitation

Sources: Tennessee Department of Health, American Association of Suicidology.