

FACT SHEET: SUICIDE

Myths	Facts
Suicides rates are higher during the winter holidays.	Suicide rates in the United States are lowest in the winter and highest in the spring. <i>Center for Suicide Prevention, 2003</i>
Suicidal people just want to die.	Most of the time, suicidal people are torn between wanting to die and wanting to live. Most suicidal individuals don't want death; they just want to stop the great psychological or emotional pain they are experiencing.
People who commit suicide do not warn others.	Eight out of every 10 people who kill themselves give definite clues to their intentions. They leave numerous clues and warnings to others, although clues may be non-verbal or difficult to detect.
People who talk about suicide are only trying to get attention. They won't really do it.	Few commit suicide without first letting someone know how they feel. Those who are considering suicide give clues and warnings as a cry for help. Over 70% who do threaten to commit suicide either make an attempt or complete the act.

Didi Hirsch Community Mental Health Center & Suicide Prevention Center. n.d.

LOS ANGELES COUNTY AND CALIFORNIA

- ❖ Of the 676 suicide deaths in LA County in 2007, 281 involved the use of a firearm. *California Department of Health Services. n.d.*
- ❖ In 2006, on average, there were 9 suicide cases per day in California. *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), n.d.*
- ❖ In 2005, suicide was the third leading cause of death among 15-24 year olds, and fourth leading cause of death among 25-34 and 35-44 year olds in California. *CDC, n.d.*

UNITED STATES

General statistics

- ❖ More than half (54.6%) of all firearm deaths in the US are caused by suicide. *CDC, 2006*
- ❖ In 2005, suicides accounted for 1.3% of all deaths in the US. *CDC, 2008.*
- ❖ Suicide took the lives of 32,637 people in 2005, a 12% increase from 1999 (n=29,199). *CDC, n.d.*

- ❖ In 2005, more than 32,000 suicides occurred in the US (11 suicides per 100,000 population). This is the equivalent of 89 suicides per day or one suicide every 16 minutes. *CDC, 2008*
- ❖ Suicide accounts for 11% of all deaths among youth and young adults aged 10-24 years result from suicide. *CDC, 2006*
- ❖ An estimated 900,000 youths, or 4% of 12 to 17 year olds, made a plan to kill themselves at the time they were having their worst or most recent major depressive disorder. An estimated 712,000 youths had tried to kill themselves during such an episode; this represents 3% of those aged 12 to 17. *Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2005*

Race/ethnicity

- ❖ Suicide rates among American Indian/Alaskan Native adolescents and young adults ages 15 to 34 (22 per 100,000) are more than 2 times higher than the national average for that age group (10 per 100,000). *CDC, 2008*
- ❖ Overall, the prevalence of having seriously considered attempting suicide was higher among white (17%) and Hispanic (18%) than black (12%) high school students in grades 9-12. *CDC, 2006*

Gender

- ❖ Women attempt suicide twice as much as men. *American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, n.d.*
- ❖ A woman takes her own life every 90 minutes in the US, but it is estimated that one woman attempts suicide every 78 seconds. *American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, n.d.*
- ❖ Males (n=25,907) are four times more likely to die from suicide than females (n=6,730). *CDC, n.d.*
- ❖ Firearms are now the leading method of suicide in women, as well as men. *American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, n.d.*
- ❖ In 2005, approximately 58% of suicides among males and 31% among females were committed with a firearm. *CDC, n.d.*
- ❖ In 2006, the suicide rates for men peak after age 85 (43 deaths per 100,000), and ones for women peak between the ages of 45-54 years old (8 deaths per 100,000). *CDC, n.d.*

If you or someone you know has talked about suicide, please call the following numbers for assistance and information. Didi Hirsch Mental Health Center: Suicide Crisis Line, 1-877-7-CRISIS; Teenline (for any crisis), 1-800-852-8336.

For full citations or more information, please contact Billie Weiss, MPH at bpweiss@ucla.edu.