



Health and Welfare Alert

Suicide Awareness and Prevention

People with developmental disabilities can be at a higher risk for suicide because of different risk factors, including co-occurring mental health diagnoses. Knowing the warning signs for suicide and how to get help can save lives.

Signs and Symptoms

These behaviors may be signs that someone is thinking about suicide:

Talking about wanting to die or wanting to kill themselves

Talking about feeling empty, hopeless, or having no reason to live

Making a plan or looking for a way to kill themselves, such as searching for lethal methods online, stockpiling pills, or buying a gun

Talking about great guilt or shame

Talking about feeling trapped or feeling that there are no solutions

Feeling unbearable pain (emotional pain or physical pain)

Talking about being a burden to others

Using alcohol or drugs more often

Acting anxious or agitated

Withdrawing from family and friend

Changing eating and/or sleeping habits

Showing rage or talking about seeking revenge

Taking great risks that could lead to death, such as driving extremely fast

Talking or thinking about death often



[Watch Dr. Brittany Myers](#) from MetroHealth Medical Center in Cleveland discuss risk factors for suicide in people with disabilities.

Visit DODD's YouTube to watch "Suicide Prevention."



Need Help Now?

Text "4HOPE" to 741741.

Call 1-800-273-TALK (8255).

Visit the crisistextline.org.

Learn more from the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (OMHAS) with the Suicide Prevention Toolkit that includes videos, data, training, and more.

Visit mha.ohio.gov/families-children-and-adults/suicide-prevention.

5 Steps to Help Someone in Emotional Pain



1. ASK:

“Are you thinking about killing yourself?” It’s not an easy question but studies show that asking at-risk individuals if they are suicidal does not increase suicides or suicidal thoughts.



2. KEEP THEM SAFE:

Reducing a suicidal person’s access to highly lethal items or places is an important part of suicide prevention. While this is not always easy, asking if the at-risk person has a plan and removing or disabling the lethal means can make a difference.



3. BE THERE:

Listen carefully and learn what the individual is thinking and feeling. Research suggests acknowledging and talking about suicide may in fact reduce rather than increase suicidal thoughts.



4. HELP THEM CONNECT:

Save the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline’s number in your phone so it’s there when you need it: **1-800-273-TALK (8255)**. You can also help make a connection with a trusted individual like a family member, friend, spiritual advisor, or mental health professional.



5. STAY CONNECTED:

Staying in touch after a crisis or after being discharged from care can make a difference. Studies have shown the number of suicide deaths goes down when someone follows up with the at-risk person.

Risk Factors

A person with disabilities may also have other factors that make them more likely to commit suicide, including their disability status, mental health diagnosis, a history of trauma, recent stressful life events, chronic pain, or impulsivity and agitation.

Safety Planning

Identify warning signs

Generate list of coping skills

Identify social supports as a means of distraction

Identify family, friends, staff, and advocates to help resolve crisis

Inform supports and the person’s team that the safety plan is documented

Go over emergency resources: 911, local crisis numbers

Remove access to lethal means of self-harm, especially firearms

From the National Institute of Mental Health | nimh.nih.gov/suicideprevention

Fast Facts

Between 2012 and 2018, there has been an increase of Ohioans with developmental disabilities served by DODD who have attempted suicide.

Sixteen people have committed suicide in that time frame.

