

## Suicide Prevention - Part I

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National Suicide Prevention Week was September 6-12, 2009. Having a week dedicated to this cause is so important in saving many lives. Of course the goal is to spread the word every day of the year.

In this month's etip article I will address the very emotional and difficult topic of suicide. My goal is to help people recognize the signs of suicide and some tips for prevention for you or loved one. I will define suicide and provide some statistics. Most importantly we will learn to identify signs of suicidal behavior and ways to intervene before a tragedy occurs. Although the main focus is on preventing suicide, I will also include some helpful advice for the survivors of a suicide.

Suicide is defined as the intentional killing of oneself. The National Guard Family Program brochure reports that 30,000 people in the United States commit suicide every year. Suicide is the 11th cause of death in the United States BUT it is the 3rd highest cause of death among teenagers. The fact is that suicide does not discriminate, it happens in every age group, gender, occupation, social economic background and ethnic group. It is reported that about 734,000 people attempt suicide each year.

The reasons that motivate people to contemplate or commit suicide vary. For the most part suicide is the only way some people feel they can resolve problems or to deal with intense, overwhelming emotions. They see no end in sight and lose hope in the future. The following factors can contribute to suicide, most of the time it is many of these factors combined that leads to suicide.

1. Social isolation/loneliness
2. Intense feelings of grief due to a death of a loved one
3. Feeling guilty for causing injury or death to another person
4. Intense feelings after a break-up in a relationship
5. Domestic violence
6. Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
7. Depression or other mental illness
8. Alcohol/drug abuse
9. Serious family, social, work, legal, financial problems
10. To avoid humiliation before family, friends and co-workers
11. Difficulty adjusting to changes in life
12. Serious chronic illness or terminal illness
13. Loss of hope
14. Previous suicide attempts
15. Family history of suicide

According to the Suicide Prevention Resource Center, there is a strong correlation between suicide and mental illness. About 95% of suicides that occur are associated with mental illness and substance abuse. However, it is important to note that there are some people who attempt or commit suicide that did not have a history of mental illness; this percentage should not be overlooked.

Next week we will focus on the warning signs of suicide. If you or a loved one has suicidal thoughts, please contact 911 or go to your nearest emergency room for assistance. Some other resources to look into are:

### **The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline**

1-800-273-TALK (8255)

TTY: 800-799-4TTY (4889)

<http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org>

### **Stop a Suicide Today**

<http://www.stopasuicide.org>

**Call Solutions EAP at 1-800-526-3485 for assistance for all of life's challenges. It's free, confidential and open to your family members. Check us out on-line at <http://www.solutions-eap.com>**