

Suicide Prevention: Helping Yourself and Others Step Back from the Ledge



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Chris Cornell. Robin Williams. Chester Bennington. What do all these names have in common? They all dealt with various addiction and substance abuse struggles. They all struggled with suicidal thoughts. And, ultimately, they all took their own lives.

There's been a [40% increase](#) in the suicide rate in the last decade. Nearly 80% of those who commit suicide are male. Suicide is one of the leading causes of death, and is expected to overtake cancer deaths within the next 15 years. In fact, one person [commits suicide](#) every 15 minutes.

Some argue that suicide has become an epidemic in our society - with someone taking their own life every fifteen minutes. This has led to comparisons between the suicide epidemic and the cancer epidemic, with suicide and depression estimated to overtake cancer as one of the leading causes of death in the next 15 years. Russell Brand has even theorized that [cultural changes](#) in the developed world have led to an increase in the number of suicides each year.

It sometimes feels like there's a new report of someone committing suicide on the news each week. For those who are struggling with depression, [substance abuse](#), or suicidal thoughts, it can feel like the world is bleak and that there is no hope to be found. Nothing could be further from the truth.

There's an unspeakable amount of grief and disbelief when we lose someone to suicide. Suicidal thoughts can happen to anyone, but that doesn't mean we're without hope. Luckily, there are some things you can do to help yourself and/or your loved ones:

Here are some things you can do:

Reduce the Stigma

Talk about mental illness, depression and suicide in the same way that you would talk about diseases like cancer. Spread awareness. Help share resources, crisis hotline numbers and prevention strategies. [Avoid criticisms](#), name-calling, casting blame or showing judgment. You never know what someone else was secretly dealing with. Mental health conditions are every bit as serious as physical conditions like cancer, and should be treated as such.

Emergency Resources

If you or a loved one are dealing with suicidal thoughts, it can be immediately beneficial to talk to someone for help. Not only does this let you know you're not alone; it can also provide coping mechanisms to help get through your current situation. There are many nonprofits and resources available to assist those in need. [Here's a list](#) of suicide prevention & crisis hotlines available around the world.

Long-term Prevention Strategies

Even if you're not currently in crisis, it is helpful to have a longer term strategy in case suicidal thoughts ever return. Prioritize your mental health care and make lifestyle changes to assist you in coping with your depression during difficult times. This might include surrounding yourself with positive, supportive people; being aware of the suicide prevention resources listed above; becoming more involved in your local church or faith-based organization; kicking an addiction or substance abuse issue; or even picking up a healthy habit such as yoga or meditation.

Losing even one person to suicide each year is losing too many. Suicides are preventable. Please use and share the crisis resources and suicide prevention strategies listed above. You never know whose life they might save - possibly even your own.

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