



## WHAT TO KNOW...

### Facts

Suicide is the leading cause of violent death in Wisconsin.

Firearms are the most common method used in suicide, followed by hanging and poisoning.

A previous suicide attempt or the loss of a loved one or friend to suicide can increase the risk.

Spur-of-the-moment behavior appears to play an important role in suicide. Suicide prevention experts believe that if deadly methods are not readily available when a person decides to attempt suicide, he or she can delay the attempt. If delayed, it may allow for the possibility of later deciding not to attempt suicide, or using less deadly methods, allowing for greater possibility of medical rescue.

From the South Central Idaho SPAN Chapter, Steps to Prevent Suicide brochure



## WHAT TO LOOK FOR...

### Warning signs

- Talking about suicide or wanting to die
- Recent crises, losses, stress; they can be financial, personal, relationships, illness and pain
- Untreated mental illness and alcohol/drug abuse
- Access to methods of suicide: firearms, poisons, suffocation/hanging

### Feelings

- No reason for living
- Hopelessness/helplessness
- Trapped/no way out
- Anger, rage
- Anxiety, agitation
- Extreme mood changes
- Heavy guilt

### Behaviors

- Big changes in eating and/or sleeping
- Risk-taking behaviors
- Impulsiveness
- Alcohol/Drug use/abuse
- Withdrawing from family/friends/usual activities
- Making final arrangements; giving away prized possessions
- Planning and preparing for suicide

If you see these changes in yourself or someone else call:

**1-608-280-2600 Crisis Line available 24/7**  
**1-800-273-8255 (TALK)**



## WHAT TO DO...

### Firearms

- Remove all firearms (shotguns, handguns, hunting rifles) from the home. Ask extended family and/or friends to store them
- Contact your local police about safe gun storage
- Get and use cable gun locks
- Lock gun cabinet or safe, store all keys in a separate location from the gun
- Keep all bullets separate from gun(s)
- Store gun(s) unloaded

### Medications/Poisons

- Destroy unused and outdated medications
- Fill drug prescriptions in small quantities
- Buy over the counter medications in small quantities
- Store all medications and poisons in a secure place

### Hanging/Suffocation

- Many items in the home can be used for suicide by hanging or suffocation
- Be alert to the risk factors and warning signs of suicide

### Alcohol/Drugs

- Monitor alcohol and drug use; as they can increase impulsivity and make symptoms worse



## Resources

**For emergency help if someone is in immediate risk of suicide**

CALL 9-1-1

Call 1-800-273-8875 (TALK)  
Press 1 for those who are a Veteran

**For additional information:**

**Dane County residents:**

Call 608-280-2600 Crisis Line (available 24/7)  
Mental Health Center of Dane County

Dane County Access to Services Map at  
[www.safercommunity.net](http://www.safercommunity.net)

HOPES – Helping Others Prevent and Educate  
About Suicide at [www.hopes-wi.org](http://www.hopes-wi.org)

Mental Health America of WI at  
[www.mhawisconsin.org](http://www.mhawisconsin.org)

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at  
[www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org)

You may download and print this brochure for your  
personal and professional use, and if used in part,  
attribute content to Suicide Prevention Task Force of  
Safe Communities, Madison, WI.

Safe Communities  
P.O. Box 6652, Madison, WI 53716-0652  
Phone: 608-256-6713  
[www.safercommunity.net](http://www.safercommunity.net)

**Thanks to American Family Insurance for  
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**Suicide is often preventable with education,  
treatment and support.**

**60–90% of people that die by suicide have  
a treatable mental illness or alcohol/drug  
abuse problem.**

## Sources

AFSP – American Foundation of Suicide  
Prevention at [www.afsp.org](http://www.afsp.org)

AAS – American Association of Suicidology at  
[www.suicidology.org](http://www.suicidology.org)

**Suicide Prevention Task Force of Safe  
Communities at [www.safercommunity.net](http://www.safercommunity.net)**  
WI-DHFS, Division of Public Health, Injury  
Prevention Program – WI Violent Injuries and  
Death Report at [www.dhfs.wisconsin.gov/wish/](http://www.dhfs.wisconsin.gov/wish/)  
Youth Suicide Steps to Prevent Suicide, South  
Central Idaho SPAN Chapter at  
[www.spanidaho.org](http://www.spanidaho.org)

## Partners

Dane County Sheriff's Office  
HOPES  
Madison Police Department  
Mental Health America of WI  
Mental Health Center of Dane County  
Public Health - Madison and Dane County  
SAFE KIDS/American Family Children's Hospital  
Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction  
Wm. S. Middleton Veterans Affairs Hospital

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# Preventing Access to Methods of Suicide:

Firearms  
Poisoning  
Suffocation/Hanging

