



An Introduction to Suicide Prevention



**Suicide is a
health issue.**



**Suicide can
be prevented.**



Scope of the Problem



Research



Prevention



What You Can Do



**How we talk
about suicide
matters.**

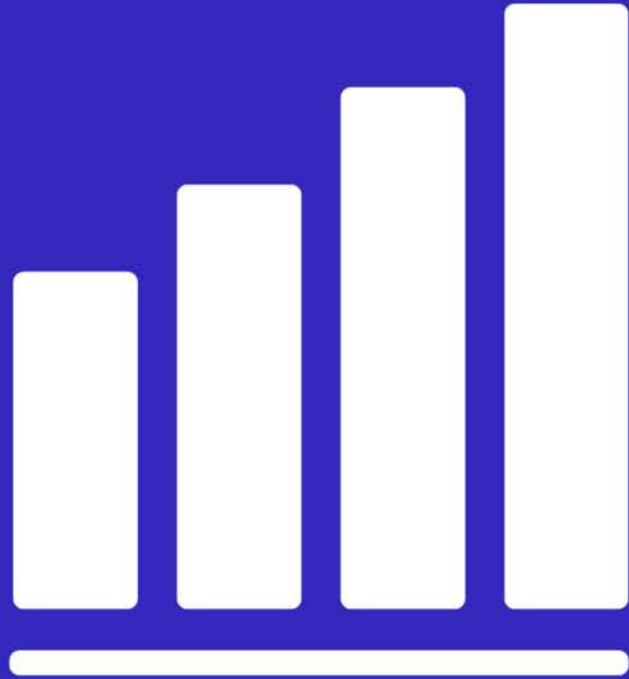
Language Do's and Don'ts

Avoid Saying

- × "Committed suicide"
- × "Failed" or "successful" attempt

Say

- ✓ "Died by suicide"
- ✓ "Ended their life"
- ✓ "Killed themselves"
- ✓ "Suicide attempt" or "death by suicide"



Scope of the Problem

SCOPE OF THE PROBLEM



**Over 800,000
people die
by suicide
each year.**

SCOPE OF THE PROBLEM



**Someone dies
by suicide every
40 seconds.**

SCOPE OF THE PROBLEM



**In the U.S.
suicide is the
10th leading
cause of death.**

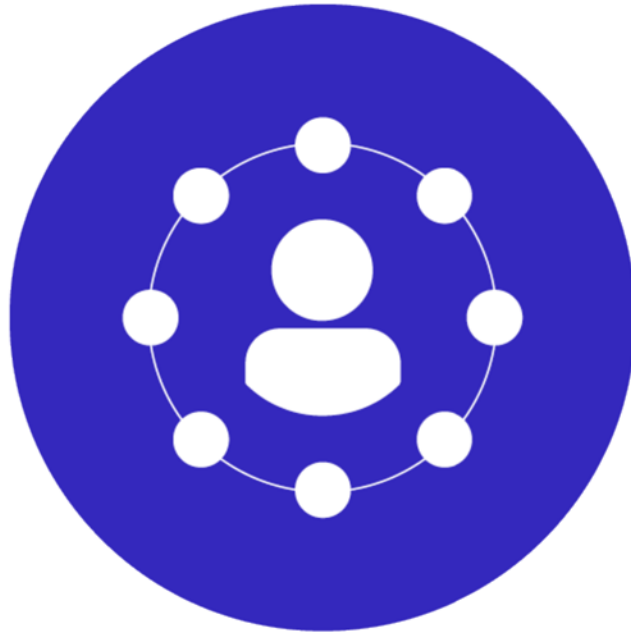
In 2018: 48,344 people died
by suicide.

SCOPE OF THE PROBLEM



**For every
suicide
25 others
attempt.**

SCOPE OF THE PROBLEM



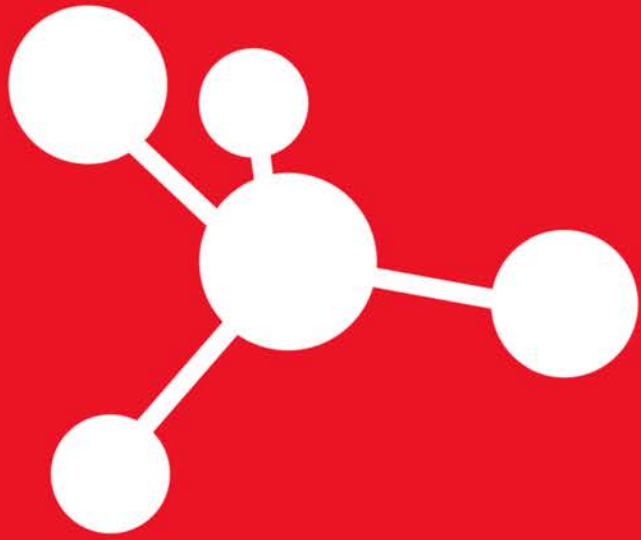
**Suicide impacts
individuals and
communities.**

SCOPE OF THE PROBLEM



**Suicide has
an economic
impact.**

\$69 billion per year in the
United States.



Research



Why do people take their own lives?

There is no single cause, but
rather multiple intersecting
factors.

RESEARCH



The large majority of people who die by suicide have a mental health condition contributing to their death.

RESEARCH



**1 in 4 people
will experience
a mental health
condition, and
most do not go on
to die by suicide.**



Physical Differences

The brains of people who die by suicide differ from those who die from other causes in both structure and function.

RESEARCH



Most people who are suicidal are ambivalent about taking their life.



The Perspective of a Suicidal Person

- Crisis point has been reached
- Desperate to escape pain
- Thinking becomes limited

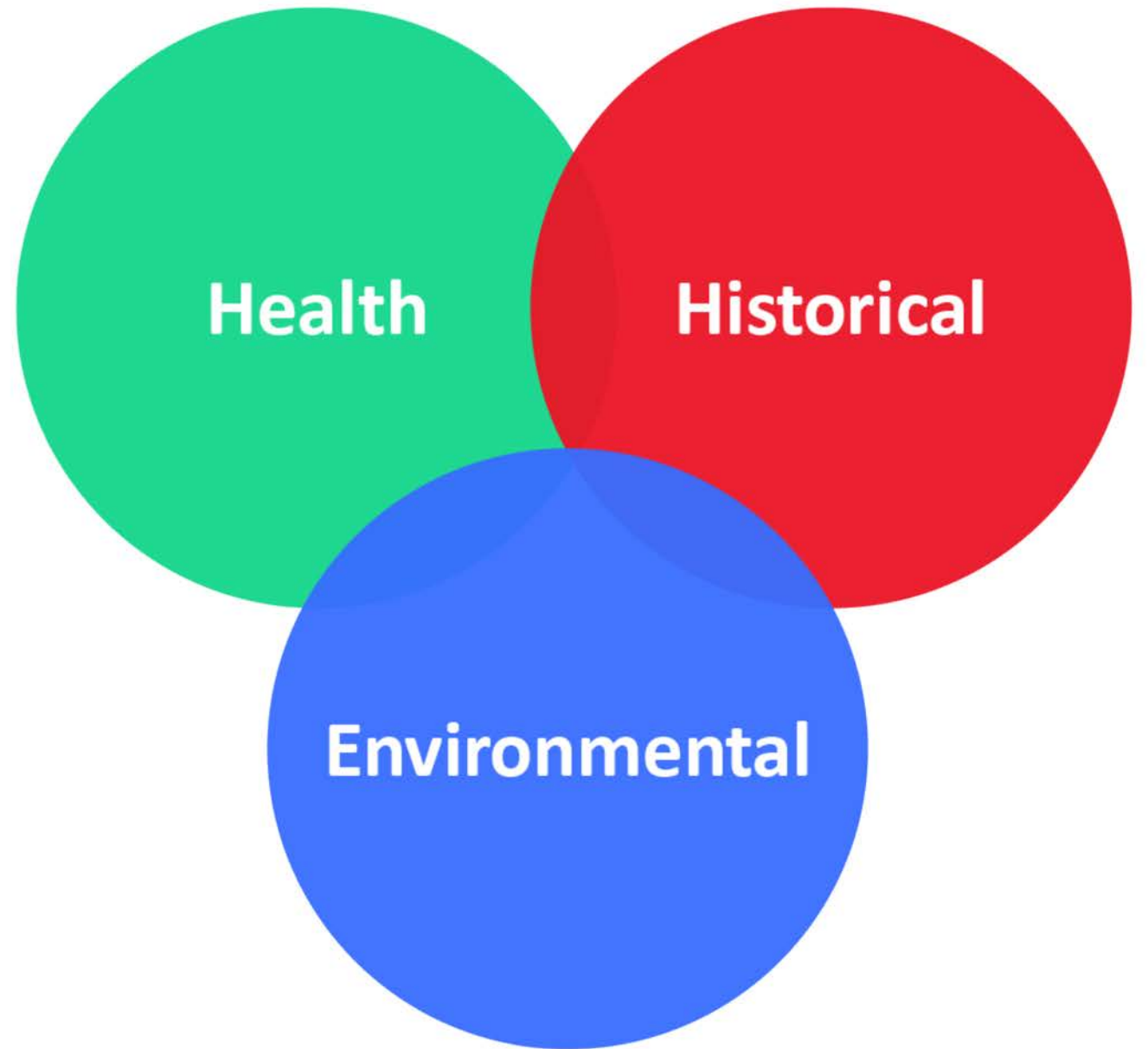
RESEARCH



Who is at risk?

RESEARCH

Risk Factors

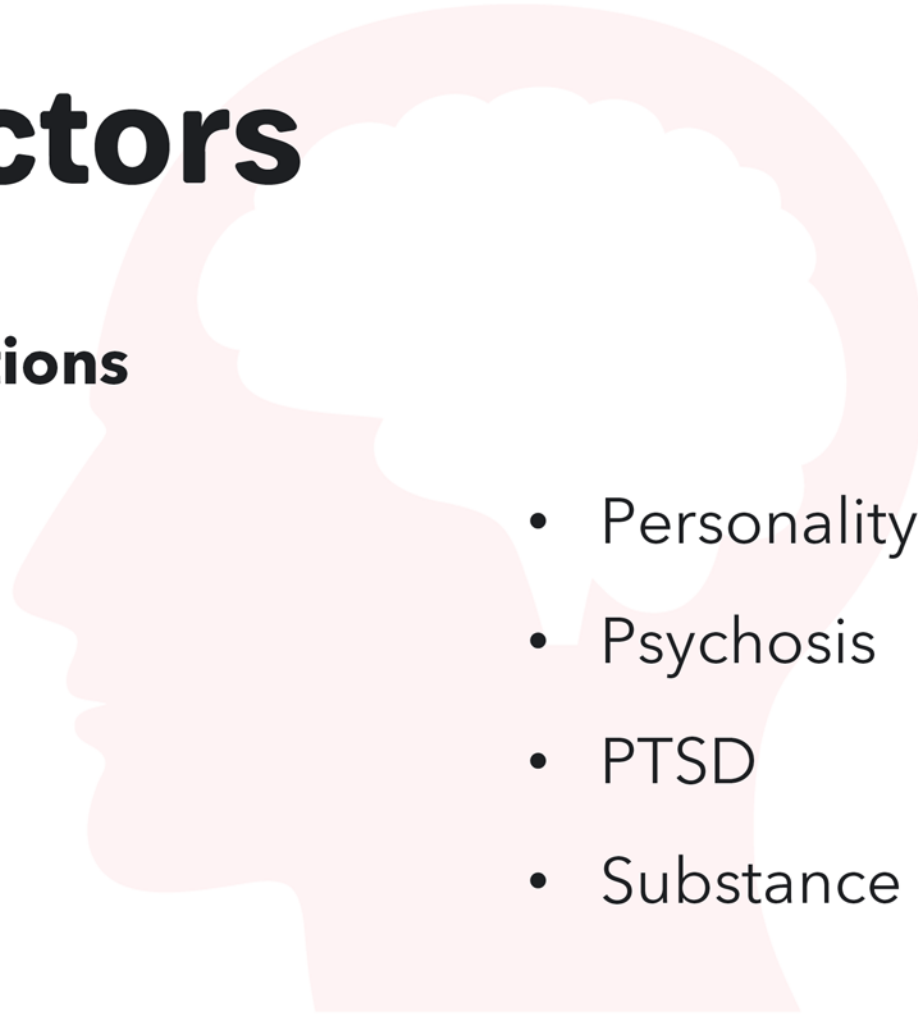


RESEARCH

Health Factors

Mental Health Conditions

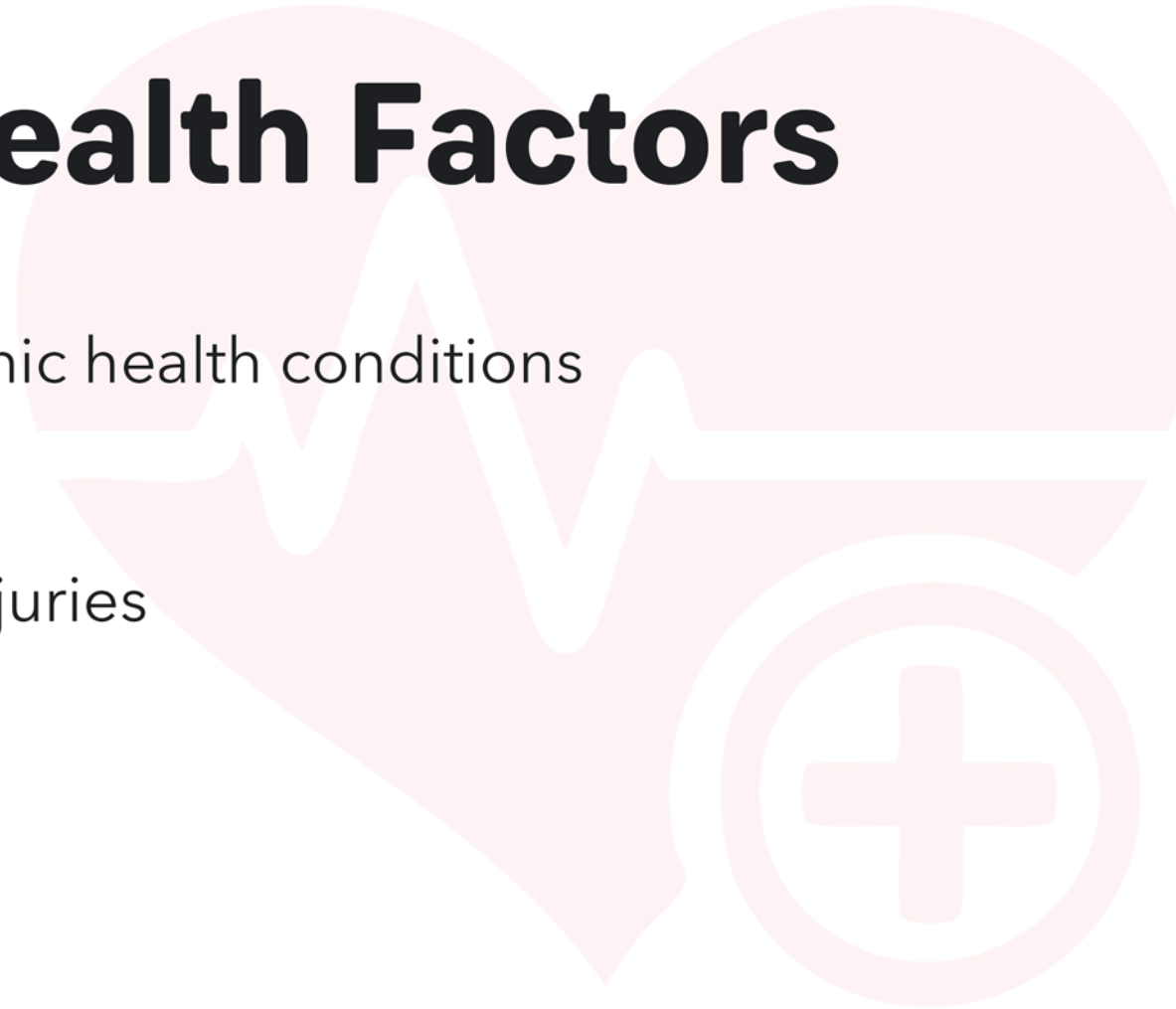
- Depression
- Bipolar disorder
- Anxiety disorders
- Eating disorders
- Personality disorders
- Psychosis
- PTSD
- Substance use disorders



RESEARCH

Other Health Factors

- Serious or chronic health conditions
- Chronic pain
- Serious head injuries




RESEARCH

Historical Facts

- Family history of suicide
- Family history of mental health conditions
- Childhood abuse
- Previous suicide attempts
- Loss

RESEARCH

Environmental Factors

- Access to lethal means
 - Exposure/contagion
 - Prolonged stress
 - Stressful life event
- 

RESEARCH

What others see:



What they may not know:



Genetic risk



Depression



Prolonged stress at work



Drinking more than usual

RESEARCH

The Importance of Research



Biomarkers



Psychotherapies



Interventions



Medication

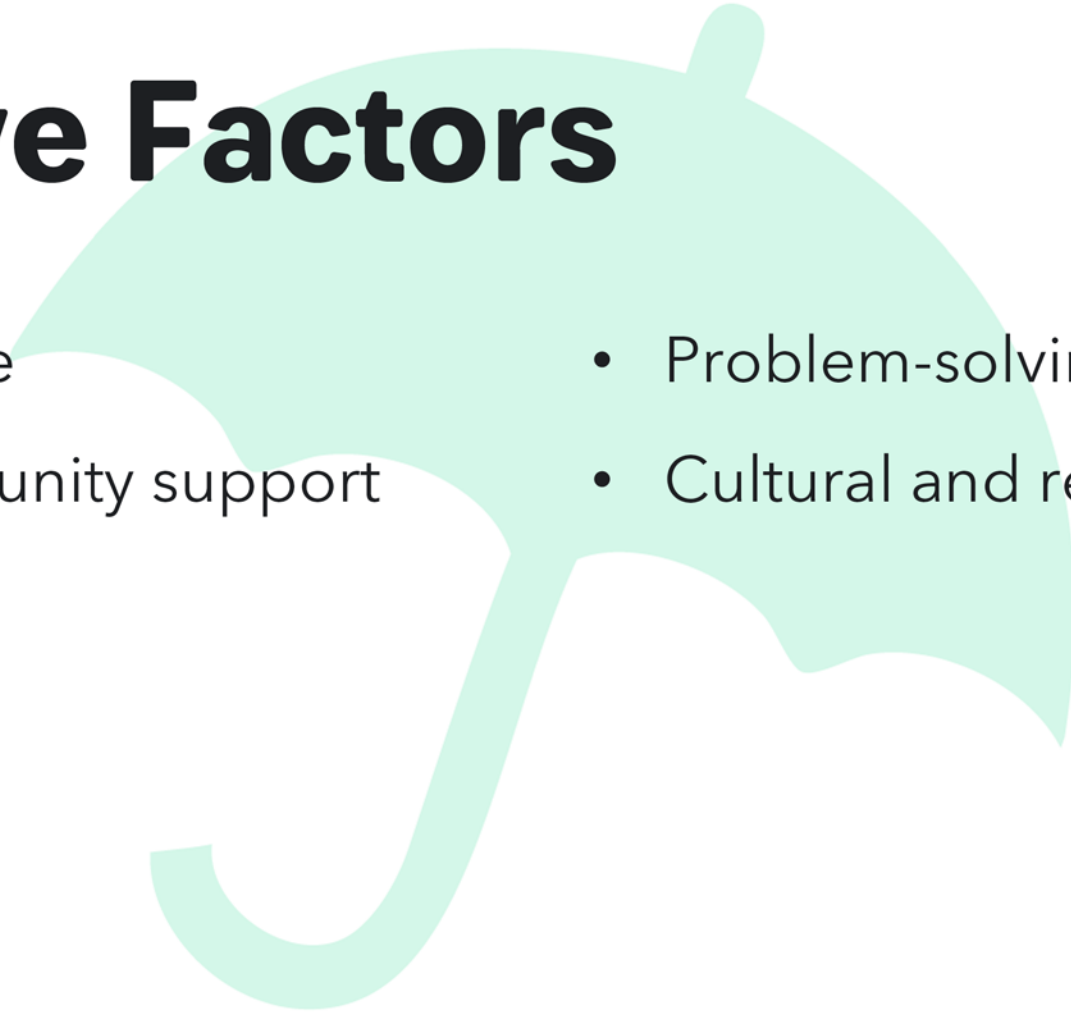


Prevention

PREVENTION

Protective Factors

- Mental health care
- Family and community support
- Problem-solving skills
- Cultural and religious beliefs



PREVENTION



**Mental health care
is an important
ingredient for
preventing suicide.**

PREVENTION



**We need a culture
where everyone
knows to be smart
about mental health.**

PREVENTION

Being Proactive About Mental Health

Make mental health a priority.

- See a doctor or mental health professional
- Get an evaluation
- Discuss treatment options
- Find what works best for the individual



PREVENTION



The law requires insurance plans to cover mental health services the same as physical health services.

PREVENTION

Self Care Strengthens Mental Health



Exercise



Sleep



Healthy diet



Stress management

PREVENTION



Support for loss survivors and those with lived experience.

PREVENTION



The most important thing you can put between a suicidal person and their way of ending their life is time.

PREVENTION



**Limiting access
to means
prevents suicide.**

PREVENTION

Limiting Access to Means



CO sensors in cars



**Blister packaging
for medication**



Barriers on bridges



Secure firearms



**What You
Can Do**

SUPPORT



**Have a
Conversation**

SUPPORT



**Watch for the
warning signs**



Reach out



Seek help

SUPPORT

Suicide Warning Signs



Talk



Behavior



Mood

SUPPORT

Talk

- Ending their lives
 - Having no reason to live
 - Being a burden to others
 - Feeling trapped
 - Unbearable pain
- 

Behavior

- Increased use of alcohol or drugs
- Issues with sleep
- Acting recklessly
- Withdrawing from activities
- Isolating from family and friends
- Looking for a way to kill themselves
- Giving away possessions



SUPPORT

Mood

- Depression
- Apathy
- Rage
- Irritability



SUPPORT



Trust your gut.

Assume you're the only one
who is going to reach out.

SUPPORT

How to Reach Out

- Talk to them in private
- Listen to their story
- Express concern and caring
- Ask directly about suicidal thoughts
 - Are you thinking of ending your life?
- Encourage them to seek mental health services

SUPPORT



**Avoid minimizing
their feelings.**

**Avoid trying to
convince them life
is worth living.**

**Avoid advice
to fix it.**

SUPPORT

If you think they might make an attempt soon.



Stay with them



**Help them
secure or
remove lethal
means**



**Escort them to
mental health
services**

SUPPORT



**Suicide Prevention
Lifeline:
Call 1-800-273-TALK**

**Crisis Text Line:
Text TALK to 741741**

SUPPORT



**For Emergencies
Call 911**

SUPPORT



**We can create a
culture that's
smart about mental
health and
suicide prevention.**



**Help us improve our program by
completing the feedback form.**

Visit afsp.org/TSLparticipant



@afspnational

afsp.org/TalkSavesLives



**American
Foundation
for Suicide
Prevention**