



# PREVENTING SUICIDE AMONG COLORADO'S OLDER ADULTS

**COLORADO COMMUNITIES ARE STRONG,**  
but that does not mean life here comes without challenges.  
Suicide affects all of us, and we can support ourselves and  
our neighbors if we have the right information to do so.

# SUICIDE

## What you need to know

### **Suicide is complex, but it is preventable.**



A suicidal crisis is usually temporary. We can manage a crisis, and figure out how to feel better afterwards.



Mental health is just as important as physical health, and our brains can benefit from treatment and support, too.



Many of us have thoughts about suicide, and there is nothing wrong with talking to someone else about them. You are not alone and you are not a burden.



Asking for and getting help is an act of strength and courage.



If you are experiencing stress, anxiety, suicidal thoughts, or any other mental health concerns, help is available:

Call 1-844-493-8255 or Text "TALK" to 38255  
Veteran Line: Dial 988, then press 1

# PREVENTION

## What we know, and what we can do

Suicide is an important public health issue that requires a community response. When communities work together to address the root causes, it can change lives for the better and make someone less likely to end their life.

## WHAT WORKS TO PREVENT SUICIDE

- Improving life circumstances (e.g., finances, housing, etc.).
- Feeling connected to family, friends, and community. Finding ways to identify those who may be struggling, intervening at the right time, and connecting with a mental health professional.
- Having easy access to mental health and substance use support, treatment, and resources.
- Increasing awareness and education about suicide prevention.



# RISK FACTORS

“Risk factors” refer to conditions that increase the chance that a person may try to take their own life.

- Mental health conditions.
- Serious physical health problems, chronic pain.
- Traumatic Brain Injury.
- Access to firearms, drugs, and other lethal means.
- Exposure to suicide.
- Stressful life events (e.g., life transitions, divorce, financial hardship, or loss of a loved one).
- Previous suicide attempts or family history of suicide.
- Trauma, abuse, neglect.

## WARNING SIGNS

These signs are usually exhibited by what someone says or does when they are suicidal.

- Talking about wanting to die or to kill oneself.
- Looking for a way to kill oneself, such as searching online or buying a gun.
- Feeling hopeless or like there is no reason to live.
- Feeling trapped or in unbearable pain.
- Changes in behavior or extreme mood swings.
- Talking about being a burden to others.
- Feeling withdrawn, isolated.
- Increasing the use of alcohol or drugs.
- Acting anxious or agitated, or behaving recklessly.
- Sleeping too little/too much.
- Showing rage or talking about seeking revenge.



If someone is exhibiting any of these warning signs, contact the suicide prevention hotline at 1-844-493-8255.

# IT'S OK TO ASK

Intervening can save a life

If you are worried someone may take their own life, the best thing you can do is directly ask if they are considering suicide.

- Don't be afraid to use the word "suicide" when asking.
- Listen carefully; allow the person to express their experience, thoughts, and feelings without interrupting.
- Express that you care about what they have to say.
- Remind them that the crisis is temporary, that support is ready and available to help them feel better soon.



## KEEP IN MIND...

- The person's privacy; have a chat somewhere private and calm.
- The reasons they share for wanting to die or if they mention a plan to end their life. This information can tell you what help is needed.
- They might not want their problems "fixed" by you. Sometimes, people just want to feel heard, seen, and valued.

## If you are worried someone is considering taking their life...

the best thing you can do is directly ask if they are thinking about suicide. If you get a response that is vague or still unclear, you can clarify and ask directly again.

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The Crisis Line Staff on the reverse of this card can help you know what to do and say.

Risk factors and warning signs for suicide should NOT be ignored. Trust your instincts. If something seems wrong, it is time to have a supportive conversation.



# PARTNERS

This guide was created in partnership with the Nevada State Office of Suicide Prevention, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary, American Legion, Disabled American Veterans, and the Wounded Warrior Project.



**COLORADO**

Department of Public  
Health & Environment

If you or someone you care about are experiencing stress, anxiety, suicidal thoughts, or any other mental health concern, help is available 24/7/365.



Call 1-844-493-8255 or Text "TALK" to 38255.  
Veteran Line: Dial 988, then press 1.

Consider cutting out the card to have on hand

# SUICIDE IN COLORADO

Similar to other Rocky Mountain states, Colorado has a higher suicide rate compared to the nation. However, Colorado's suicide fatality rate has remained statistically stable since 2016.

In Colorado, men ages 25-64 die by suicide at higher rates than any other group. Adult males ages 65 and older have the next highest suicide rate, followed by young adult males ages 19-24, and then male youth ages 10-18. Firearms continue to be the most often used means for suicide.

## SUICIDE IS COMPLEX

There is no single cause for suicide. Suicide most often occurs when stressors and health issues come together to create an experience of hopelessness and despair. Suicide occurs in every racial and ethnic group, gender, occupation, geographic region and socioeconomic status.

## SUICIDE IS PREVENTABLE

**MORE THAN 90% of those who make an attempt and survive will not go on to die by suicide.**

Many Coloradans will struggle with suicide at some point in their lives. The vast majority of those who have thoughts of suicide will not go on to make an attempt. Suicide-related data can be used to change systems to help support lives worth living.

# RESOURCES & EDUCATION



## Man Therapy

24/7 resource for working-aged men to think differently about their mental health and take action before they reach a crisis. [ManTherapy.org](http://ManTherapy.org)

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## Operation Veteran Strong

Military members/families can explore tools, resources, and do-it-yourself tips for physical and mental health, discover community connections, and access VA benefits. [OperationVeteranStrong.org](http://OperationVeteranStrong.org)

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## Colorado OSP

Access resources to prevent deaths by suicide and respond appropriately after a suicide attempt or loss. [COOSP.org](http://COOSP.org)

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## Storing firearms safely can save lives.

Gun owners can help prevent suicide and keep our loved ones and ourselves safe. Putting time and distance between a suicidal person and a firearm may save a life.

Point your phone camera at these QR codes to access the resource

Suicide Risk  
Safety Plan



OSP Gun Safety &  
Suicide Webpage



Firearm Safety  
Info Sheet

