



## Suicide and America's Youth

### Important Suicide Facts

- There are 3 suicides for every 2 homicides nationwide.
- Suicide is the 8th ranking cause of death in the United States.
- There is one suicide every 17 minutes.
- There are 4 male suicides for every female suicide. However, at least twice as many females as males *attempt* suicide.

### Youth and Suicide

- Suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death among college students.
  - Suicide attempts pose the *greatest* life-threatening danger for college women.
  - The rate of suicide among young males has tripled since 1970.
- Almost 1,100 suicides are projected to occur on campuses this year.
- Among college students, 7.5 of every 100,000 take their own lives.
- 4 out of 5 young adults who attempt suicide have given clear warnings.
- 18-24 year-olds think about suicide more often than any other age group, and one in twelve U.S. college students makes a suicide plan.
- Suicide is the third-leading cause of death among youth overall (ages 15-24).
- Every hour and forty-five minutes another young person commits suicide.
- The National College Health Risk Behavior Study found that 11.4% of students seriously considers attempting suicide.
- Up to 60% of high school students report thinking about suicide at least once in their lives.
- In 1998, suicide killed more young adults than AIDS, cancer, heart disease, pneumonia, birth defects, stroke, influenza, and chronic lung disease combined.

### Risk Factors

- Mental Illness: 90% of adolescent suicide victims have at least one diagnosable, active psychiatric illness at the time of death – most often depression, substance abuse, and conduct disorders. *Only 15% of suicide victims were in treatment at the time of death.*
- Previous Attempts: 26-33% of adolescent suicide victims have made a previous suicide attempt.
- Stressors: Suicide in youth often occurs after the victim has gotten into trouble or has experienced a recent disappointment or rejection.
- Firearms: Having a firearm in the home greatly increases the risk of youth suicide. 64% of suicide victims 10-24 years old use a firearm to complete the act.

### Sources:

- American Association of Suicidology, [www.suicidology.org](http://www.suicidology.org)
- Murphy, S. L. (2000). Deaths: Final date for 1998. *National Vital Statistics Report*, 48 (11). DHHS Publication No. (PHS) 2000-1120.
- American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, [www.afsp.org](http://www.afsp.org)
- Here for Life, [www.hereforlife.org](http://www.hereforlife.org)
- The Jason Foundation, Inc., [www.jasonfoundation.org](http://www.jasonfoundation.org)