

# Early Warning Signs of Suicide

While talking about suicide may be uncomfortable and unpleasant for some, raising awareness surrounding the symptoms and behaviors may ultimately save a person's life.

If a person threatens suicide, they should **ALWAYS** be taken seriously, regardless of their age.

People who are at the highest risk for suicide are those with a mental illness, due to lack of impulse control, lack of resources, and various life stressors that can be perceived as more severe than those of someone without a mental illness. Between 30-70% of suicide victims suffer from Major Depression or Bipolar Disorder (formerly known as Manic Depression). In fact, 90% of people who die by suicide have a diagnosable mental disorder.

Some risk factors for suicide include:

- One or more prior suicide attempts
- Family history of mental illness/substance abuse
- Family history of suicide
- A chronic physical illness, including chronic pain
- Physical or sexual abuse

**75% of those who die by suicide exhibit some warning signs. If you or someone you know exhibits several of the suicide warning signs listed below, immediate action is required.**

## **Suicide Warning Signs**

- **Appearing depressed or sad most of the time**
- **Withdrawing from friends and family**
- **Feeling trapped-like there is no other way out of a situation**
- **Exhibiting a significant change in personality, such as a person who is normally bubbly and cheerful becomes isolated and withdrawn from everyone**
- **Experiencing a change in sleep habits, either too much or not enough sleep**
- **Experiencing a change in eating habits**

What do you do if you think someone is considering suicide?

- Trust your instincts that the person may be in trouble
- Talk with them about your concerns and **LISTEN**
- Ask direct questions without being judgmental

- Get professional help, even if the person resists
- Do not leave the person alone or with access to means (sharp, firearms, etc.)
- Do not swear to secrecy
- Do not act shocked or judgmental
- Do not counsel the person yourself

Some resources:

**Suicide Helpline: 1-800-SUICIDE or 1-800-273-TALK**

**911**

**Mobile Crisis Teams:**

**Cherokee - for Hamblen, Cocke, Jefferson, Grainger, Claiborne, and Union Counties (423)-586-5031**

**Peninsula - for Knox, Loudon, Monroe, Blount, and Sevier Counties (865)-539-2409**

**Ridgeview - for Anderson, Roane, Morgan, Scott and Campbell Counties (865)-481-6176**

**Frontier - for Carter, Greene, Hancock, Hawkins, Johnson, Sullivan, Unicoi, and Washington Counties 1-877-928-9062**

**Youth Villages - crisis services for YOUTH across Tennessee  
1-866-791-9224**

**Crisis Stabilization Unit - (865)-541-6958**

Websites:

[www.suicide.org](http://www.suicide.org)

[www.tspn.org](http://www.tspn.org)