

# UNDERSTANDING SUICIDE

*"If you really knew me, you'd know I've thought about killing myself a number of times."*

A person is skateboarding on a paved surface at night. The scene is dimly lit, with a street light visible in the background. A large puddle in the foreground reflects the skateboarder and the sky above. The reflection is inverted, showing the person upside down.

THE **HOPE**LINE  
[www.TheHopeLine.com](http://www.TheHopeLine.com)

# First of all... How are you?



**Have you been thinking about taking your life?**

If you are feeling suicidal right now, please chat live with TheHopeLine or **CALL THE NATIONAL SUICIDE HOTLINE** by dialing **988**.

You are not alone. Many people struggle with suicidal thoughts at some point in their life. Struggling with these thoughts doesn't mean you're weak. It means you're going through something painful. Don't try to go through it by yourself. Need someone to talk to?

The National Suicide Crisis  
Hotline is available 24/7.

**Call 988**

Hope Coaches are available  
24/7 via chat on our website.

**[TheHopeLine.com/chat-live](https://www.thehopeline.com/chat-live)**

If you're looking for a  
sign to keep living...

**THIS IS  
YOUR  
SIGN!**

**THE HOPE LINE**  
True Connection

# WHAT TO DO IF YOU'RE SUICIDAL

## 1 Reach out for help.

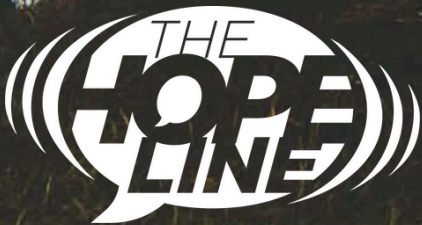
You are not alone, and you don't have to face your pain by yourself. Try reaching out to someone you trust—a friend or family member—and let them know how you're really feeling. They may not respond perfectly, and that's okay. Even if they don't have the right words, it doesn't mean they don't care.

## 2 Refer to your safety plan.

If you haven't yet created a safety plan, do so now. Then refer to it whenever you have a moment of strong feelings of not wanting to live. If you don't have one, here's an example of what a good safety plan could look like.

1. What are the warning signs that a crisis might be developing?
2. What are some things you can do right now to get your mind off of suicidal thoughts?  
(Physical activity, Relaxation Techniques, etc.)
3. What settings provide a distraction for you?
4. List 2 or 3 people you will ask for help when you are feeling this way and how to contact them?
5. What professionals or agencies can you contact for help?
6. How can you make your environment safe?
7. One thing that is most important to you and worth living for is: \_\_\_\_\_

"fight, fight some more, and then fight some more after that." - Dawson McAllister.





# 3

## **Remove whatever can harm you at that very moment.**

Get away from anything you can use to hurt yourself. Leave your house if you need to in order to be safe and give yourself time to settle down. Some people are most suicidal while under the influence. Clear any intoxicating substances out of your house and vehicle, or ask someone you know and trust to help you.

Remember, when you are feeling suicidal, time is your friend. It is with time that we begin to think far more clearly.

# 4

## **Realize that you will die if you believe the lie.**

The belief that suicide will solve all your problems is a lie because it suggests there is no other way out of your difficulties except to end your life. Help is always available, even if it doesn't fix everything right away. Seeking support allows you to explore safe solutions that can improve your situation over time.

# 5

## **Turn to other activities.**

If you're feeling close to suicide, shift your focus away from those thoughts by redirecting your mind to healthy, safe activities that help you work through your challenges. Try going for a walk, taking a hot shower, listening to music, spending time with a friend, etc. The key is to do anything that distracts and changes your mental channel, giving space for clearer thinking to emerge.

THE  
**HOPE**  
LINE

# WHY SAY **NO** TO SUICIDE?

The **BEST** reasons to keep living your life

## Do you know for certain what the future holds?

---

What if you miss out on something **GREAT**? If you can work through your pain in this moment, you might find that on the other side awaits a life full of meaningful experiences that you can't even imagine.

## Someone **DOES** Care.

---

You may feel completely alone, but there are people who care about you and will talk to you if you seek them out. You can even chat with a **Hope Coach** today on [thehopeline.com](http://thehopeline.com)

## You can help save someone else's life.

---

At this moment, you may need to work on your own healing, but in time, you could be that person who steps up to help others who are struggling.

## God **LOVES** you.

---

You can have **HOPE**, because God has a purpose for your life. Please don't rob yourself of tomorrow, when tomorrow could be the greatest time of your life.



# Suicide Statistics

Suicide accounts for

# 720,000

DEATHS PER YEAR globally



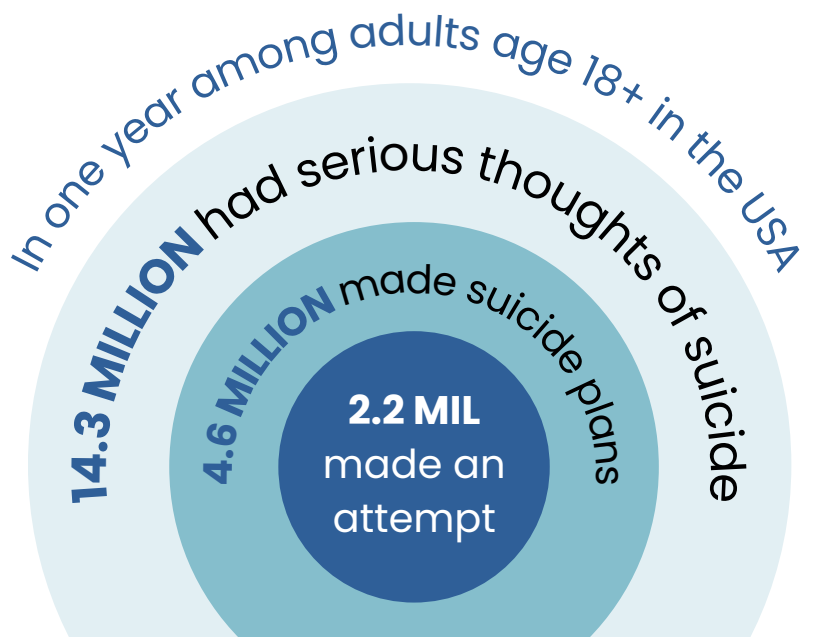
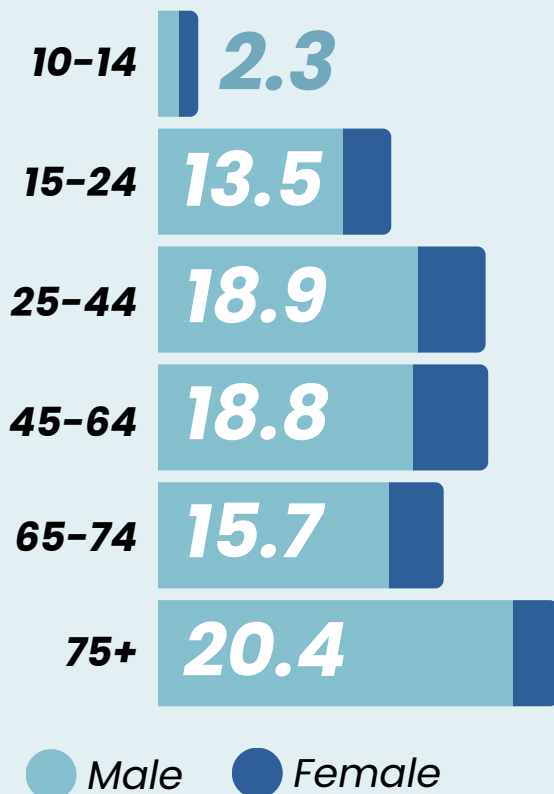
That's one person every

# 44 Seconds

Suicide is the **2nd** LEADING CAUSE OF DEATH among people AGE 10-34.

## Suicide Rates Per Age Group

Total number of suicide deaths per 100,000 people



Approximately **49,000 people** die by suicide each year in the USA. That's a rate of **14.7 per 100,000** people, a rate that has risen a staggering **30%** over the past 20 years.

**MEN ARE**  
**4X MORE LIKELY**  
to commit suicide than women



“I know it’s tough. Your pain is real and sometimes suffocating.” – Dawson McAllister

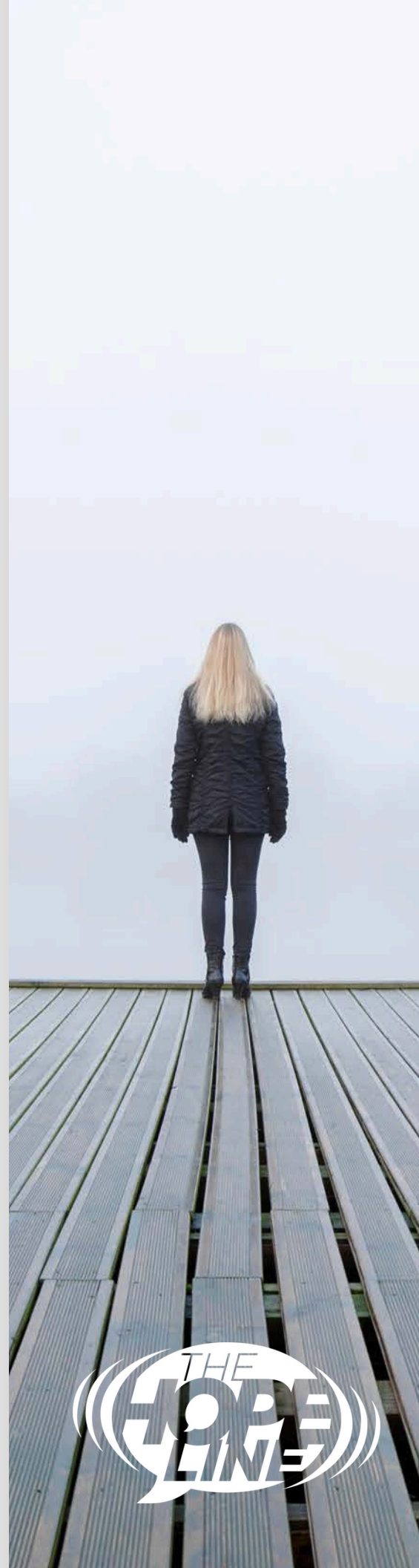
Suicide is not an easy topic to discuss, but talking about suicide saves lives. There are many reasons people consider taking their own life: feeling like a burden to others, seeing no reason to keep living, depression, despair, pain, hopelessness, guilt, abuse, rejection, etc.

People who live with suicidal ideation are hurting so badly that they want nothing more than for the pain to end. They cannot imagine the pain ever going away. Suicide prevention starts with recognizing the warning signs, taking them seriously, and reaching out to the person who is struggling.

## Risk Factors of Suicide

There is no single cause, risk, or warning sign for suicide, but there are things you can look for if you think someone might be suicidal. Take any suicidal talk, action, risk factor, or warning sign seriously.

- **mental illness**
- **depression**
- **alcoholism or drug abuse**
- **abuse**
- **previous suicide attempts**
- **family history of suicide**
- **family history of abuse or trauma**
- **terminal illness**
- **chronic pain**
- **recent loss**
- **recent traumatic event**
- **social isolation**
- **loneliness**
- **lack of support network**



# SUICIDE **WARNING** SIGNS

**If you recognize several of these warning signs in someone, take the time to ask caring questions, offer your support, and work with them to create a plan for help.**

Sudden or gradual disinterest in what was a favorite extracurricular activity

Problems at work or loss of interest in a previously satisfying job

Any substance abuse, legal or illegal, including alcohol

Behavioral problems at school or other activities

Withdrawing from friends and/or family members

Risk taking behavior

Depression or other mental health disorders

Chronic complaints of physical issues like aches, pains, migraines or fatigue

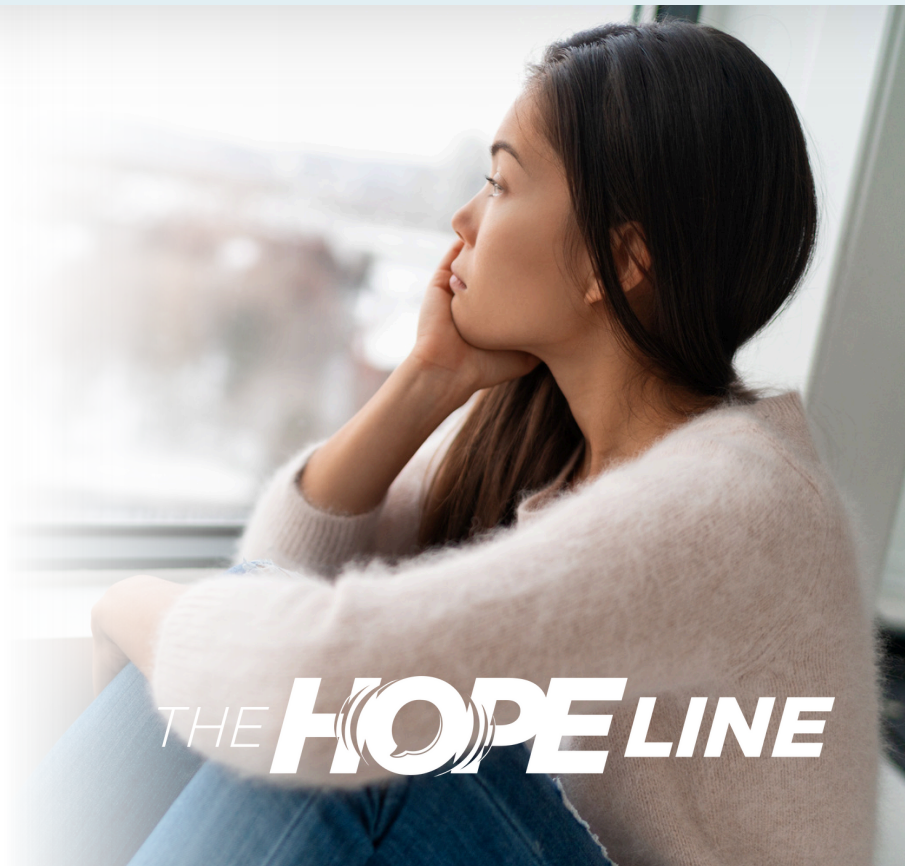
Neglecting personal hygiene or physical appearance

Inability to concentrate or pay attention

Chronic complaints of being bored or trapped

Disinterest in compliments or praise being offered by others

***If you believe someone may be thinking about suicide or showing any warning signs, reach out for help right away.***



THE **HOPE** LINE

# More **DRASTIC** indicators of suicide risk

Using phrases such as "I want you to know something just in case something happens to me," or "I won't be a burden to you much longer," or "Forget it. It doesn't matter. Nothing matters anymore."

Practicing suicide notes or phrasing

Death or suicide themes appearing in artwork, schoolwork or journals

Actually stating  
**"I want to die."**

Gifting belongings or promising them to family or friends.

Discarding of previously important belongings.

## self harming

Occasional expressions of bizarre or unsettling thoughts



# THE SUICIDE SCALE

When a friend talks about suicide, it's important to take time for an honest assessment of how serious their thoughts or intentions may be. This helpful chart can guide you in understanding the level of risk.

On a scale of 1-6, how suicidal are you?



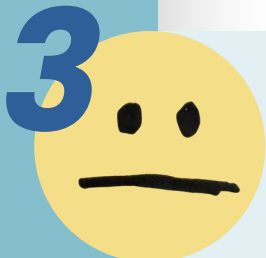
## *I'm doing fine!*

Honestly, I'm feeling pretty good. The only times I think about suicide are when it randomly comes up in conversations or I hear about it from somebody else.



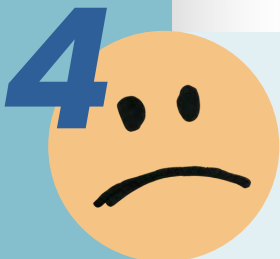
## *I'm feeling pretty depressed.*

Sometimes the thought of suicide comes into my mind when I'm feeling stressed or frustrated. It's like an intrusive thought. Sometimes it comes to mind, but I would never actually do it.



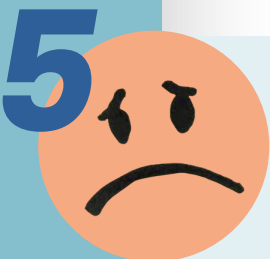
## *I think about suicide a lot.*

Suicide is starting to feel appealing to the point that it's troubling. It's not just a thought I have sometimes. It's a consistent feeling that seems to always be there.



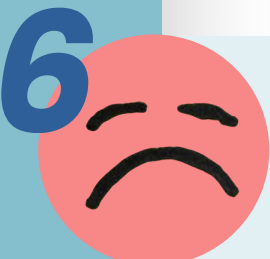
## *I fantasize about suicide.*

I can distract myself from the thoughts of suicide if I really try, but it's getting really difficult. Honestly, if an out of control semi were coming my way, I might not move.



## *I am passively suicidal.*

I can't stop thinking about suicide even if I try. I'm starting to do reckless things and I've stopped fighting the thoughts. I'm holding on, but barely. It isn't safe for me to be alone.



## *I am actively suicidal.*

I've made the decision to take my life. It's just a matter of time before I do. I am making a plan to end my life. If I don't get medical attention, I will make an attempt.

# MYTHS & TRUTHS about suicide

You don't have to give in to the lies.



**Myth:** Confronting someone about suicide will only make them angry and increase the risk of a suicide attempt.

**Truth:** Asking directly about suicidal thoughts can actually reduce anxiety, open communication, and lower the risk of a suicide attempt.

**Myth:** Only trained professionals can prevent suicide.

**Truth:** Everyone has a role to play. By showing care and listening, anyone can help prevent the tragedy of suicide.



**Myth:** Suicidal people always keep their plans secret.

**Truth:** Many people who are considering suicide share warning signs or talk about their thoughts with others in the days or weeks before an attempt.

**Myth:** People who openly talk about suicide never actually do it.

---

**Truth:** Talking about suicide is often a sign of serious distress. Those who express suicidal thoughts may attempt or die by suicide.



**Myth:** Suicide only affects certain types or classes of people

---

**Truth:** There's no single profile of a suicidal person. People from all walks of life may experience suicidal thoughts.

**Myth:** Faithful or "good" Christians would never attempt suicide.

---

**Truth:** Anyone, regardless of faith or background, can feel alone or desperate. Struggles with mental health are human, not spiritual failures.



**Myth:** Nothing can be done to stop someone who wants to die.

---

**Truth:** Suicide is not inevitable. When people in crisis receive support and care, they can recover and go on to live meaningful lives.

# HOW YOU CAN HELP SOMEONE WHO IS SUICIDAL

If you believe a friend or family member may be thinking about suicide, it's important to take their situation seriously while remaining calm and not overreacting. The most helpful thing you can do is listen with care. Let them know they are not alone and that you want to support them in getting the help they need.

## Take them seriously.

Regardless of whether you feel the person's problems are "serious enough" for them to feel suicidal or not, take them seriously. It's not about how bad the problem is but how badly it's hurting the person.

## Listen without judgement.

Listen to your friend or loved one without acting shocked, disappointed or afraid. Just letting your friend talk about how they are feeling can help them.

## Offer hope.

Help them come to the realization that their pain is temporary and that their life is valuable.



When talking with a suicidal friend or loved one, don't put pressure on yourself to "fix" their problems. You are simply there to listen, be supportive and show you care.

## **Don't promise confidentiality.**

Refuse to be sworn to secrecy. You may have to seek additional help from law enforcement or a professional counselor in order to keep them safe.

---

## **Get professional help.**

Encourage them to get professional help. Help them find treatment and offer to go with them.

---

## **Make a plan for life.**

Encourage them to create a "Plan for Life." This is a set of steps they agree to follow if they ever face another crisis. Their plan can begin with a simple verbal commitment not to act on suicidal thoughts before reaching out for help. The next step is connecting with a trusted professional or support service.

Make sure they have access to emergency contacts, such as [TheHopeline.com](https://www.thehopeline.com) and the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline at **988**, which both offer free, 24/7 support.

---

## **Keep reaching out to them.**

It's not your responsibility to save them, but you can continue to reach out and tell them you care about them.

*One exception to this is if it's an ex trying to manipulate you. Refer them to another source of support, but don't prolong the relationship any further.*



## How to handle your conversation with a suicidal friend

### What to say

"You're not alone. I'm here with you."

"I may not fully understand what you're going through, but I care about you and want to support you."

"Have you been able to talk with anyone who could help you through this?"

### What **NOT** to say

"Your life's not that bad."

"You have so much to live for."

"Suicide is selfish."

"Suicide is the easy way out."

"Things could be worse."

"You will go to hell if you die by suicide."

*When you're supporting someone who's suicidal, remember to care for yourself too. It can be emotionally exhausting, so make sure you reach out to a friend, family member, pastor, or counselor for your own support.*

THE **HOPELINE**



# For Survivors of Suicide Loss

Every year in the United States, nearly 49,000 people die by suicide. For each of these deaths, it's estimated that at least 130 people knew the person who was lost —meaning over 6 million Americans are in some way affected by suicide each year.

Losing a loved one to suicide is a uniquely traumatic experience that leaves a lasting impact. The pain and complexities of suicide loss often feel different from grieving other types of losses.

**Guilt** – You may feel as if you could have stopped the suicide.

**Stigma** – Society still attaches a stigma of shame to suicide.

**Anger** – You may feel anger toward the person you lost, as they are also the murderer of the person you loved.

**Disconnection** – You may feel disconnected from the person you lost and their memories because they made a choice to end their life.

## Take the time to process your grief

The *American Association of Suicidology* has published a handbook for survivors of suicide.



THE  
**HOPE**  
LINE

[suicidology.org/community-support-resources/suicide-loss-survivors/](https://suicidology.org/community-support-resources/suicide-loss-survivors/)

# If You Really Knew Me...

## Author Unknown

---

*If you really knew me you would know that I cry myself to sleep like all the time.*

*If you really knew me you would know that I cut myself for almost 7 years off and on.*

*If you really knew me you would know that I'm scared of everything.*

*If you really knew me you would know that I would rather make other people happy instead of myself.*

*If you really knew me you would know that I don't trust anyone.*

*If you really knew me you would know that I have tried to kill myself before.*

*If you really knew me you would know that I do things with guys so that they will like me.*

*If you really knew me you would know that I hate myself for moving away from my brother and my sister.*

*If you really knew me you would know that I wish that I could grow closer to God but I just can't.*

*If you really knew me you would know that I wish I was someone else.*

*If you really knew me you would know that I wish that I had a different mother.*

*If you really knew me you would know that I wish I could make my father love me.*

*If you really knew me you would know that I think about the baby I lost every day.*

*If you really knew me you would know that I am in love with my best guy friend and have been for 3 years now.*

*If you really knew me you would know that I stopped eating breakfast and lunch about 2 weeks ago and the only thing I eat is dinner and that is only because I have to.*

*If you really knew me you would know that I have gotten in to fist fights with my uncle a number of times.*

*If you really knew me you would know that I...*

---

This story comes from someone who found help through TheHopeline. It offers a real glimpse into the struggles many suicidal individuals face. It's a reminder of why our support matters so deeply—and why we can never overlook the warning signs of suicide.

# A *Spiritual* Perspective

If you are feeling lonely, suicidal, or depressed, please know that you are not alone in your struggles. **Jesus Christ also experienced moments of deep dissatisfaction and pain.**

At one point, He even prayed earnestly to God, saying, *"If there is any way, get me out of this"* (Matthew 26:39, The Message).

Yet, the Bible tells us that Jesus came to earth and died so that everyone could have *"real and eternal life, more and better life than they ever dreamed of."* (John 10:10, The Message).

God has a unique and meaningful plan for your future. Whatever problem you are going through, **THERE IS A SOLUTION!**

To find out what it is, check out [thehopeline.com/solution](http://thehopeline.com/solution)



**Talk with someone about your questions**

If you want to know more about what it means to have a relationship with God or have questions about the topic of suicide, our Hope Coaches are available 24/7 to chat with you about whatever is on your mind.



**← CHAT  
LIVE WITH  
A HOPE  
COACH**



# THE HOPE LINE

Our mission is to help students and young adults in crisis by offering sound advice and a safe place to connect. Through our online resources and the ability to chat live with a Hope Coach 24/7, we are here to help people make a true connection.

Founded by Dawson McAllister in 1991, TheHopeLine is a 100% donor funded ministry. If you would like to learn more about partnering with us, visit [thehopeline.com/partners-in-hope](https://thehopeline.com/partners-in-hope).



TheHopeLine



@thehopeline



@thehopeline



TheHopeLine

## Sources

World Health Organization suicide fact sheet:

World Health Organization (2025). Suicide. WHO Newsroom Fact Sheets. Retrieved from <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/suicide>

American Association of Suicidology facts and statistics:

American Association of Suicidology (2025). Facts and Statistics. Retrieved from <https://suicidology.org/facts-and-statistics/>

CDC Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System (WISQARS) for 2023 suicide data:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. WISQARS Leading Causes of Death, 2023. Retrieved from

<https://wisqars.cdc.gov/lcd/>

<https://wisqars.cdc.gov/lcd/?o=LCD&y1=2023&y2=2023&ct=11&cc=ALL&g=00&s=0&r=0&ry=3&e=0&ar=lcdIage&at=groups&ag=lcdIage&a1=0&a2=199>

National Institute of Mental Health suicide statistics:

National Institute of Mental Health (2022). Suicide Statistics. Retrieved from

<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/statistics/suicide>

Statista suicide death rates by gender in the U.S. since 1950:

Statista (2025). Suicide death rates by gender in the U.S. 1950-2022. Retrieved from

<https://www.statista.com/statistics/187478/death-rate-from-suicide-in-the-us-by-gender-since-1950/>

These sources provide authoritative, recent data on global and U.S. suicide statistics, mortality rates, and demographic breakdowns.