

Seven myths & facts about suicide

1. Myth: Most people who talk about suicide or threaten to kill themselves will never do it.

Fact: Actually, many people who complete suicide have talked about it or hinted at it. All threats should be taken seriously.

2. Myth: It's best not to plant the idea of suicide by talking about it with someone who seems depressed.

Fact: Talking about suicide provides the opportunity for communication. Fears that are shared are more likely to diminish. The first step in encouraging a suicidal person to live comes from talking about those feelings. The first step can be the simple inquiry about whether or not the person is intending to end their life. However, talking about suicide should be carefully managed.

3. Myth: Only crazy people commit suicide.

Fact: Everyone has the potential for suicide. While many people who kill themselves are clinically depressed, most are in touch with reality and are not psychotic.

4. Myth: If a person attempts suicide and survives, they will never make a further attempt.

Fact: A suicide attempt is regarded as an indicator of further attempts. It is likely that the level of danger will increase with each further suicide attempt.

5. Myth: Suicide happens more often during the holidays, such as Christmas and Thanksgiving.

Fact: Suicide rates are lowest in December and peak during the spring.

6. Myth: If a person is determined to commit suicide, nothing will stop them.

Fact: Suicides can be prevented. People can be helped. Suicidal crises can be relatively short-lived. Suicide is a permanent solution to what is usually a temporary problem. Most suicidal people feel ambivalent and are torn between the desire to live and the desire to die. They just want the emotional pain to stop and see no other way out.

7. Myth: Teens are the greatest risk to commit suicide.

Fact: Adults are more likely to take their own life. At particularly high risk are adults between 45 and 54, who had a suicide rate of 19.72 deaths per 100,000 people, compared with about 19 per 100,000 in people over 85, and 13 per 100,000 in the general population. Still, teenagers remain a high-risk group. The percentage of emergency room visits related to suicidal thoughts or attempts among children and teens more than doubled from 2008 to 2015. (The suicide rate for 15- to 24-year-olds is 13.15 per 100,000.)

Help is available. For additional information, visit www.magellanhealth.com/mymh

Sources: American Foundation for Suicide Prevention; CDC.gov; Nevada Division of Public and Behavioral Health Office of Suicide Prevention