

DAILY FLASH: **OCTOBER 9, 2020**

COVID-19 and the Risk of Suicide

Suicide Video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aSAeOhCrv_s

There seems to be no getting away from the COVID-19 pandemic. Not only is social distancing and restrictions the new norm, but we are overwhelmed by news stories about loss of life, and the natural exhaustion we all feel while wondering when it will end. There are the additional issues of economic stress, social isolation, loss of community or religious support, barriers to mental health treatment, and the influence of social media.

Most often, suicidal thoughts are the result of feeling like you can't cope or recover when you're faced with what seems to be an overwhelming life situation. The pandemic has added intense emotional and mental stress to the lives of people around the world and therefore is increasing the strain on mental health, and is increasing the risk of, and the incidences of suicide across our nation.

Warning signs of suicide

Whether you're having thoughts of suicide or know someone who is suicidal, learn suicide warning signs and how to reach out for immediate help and professional treatment. You may save a life— your own or someone else's.

Suicide warning signs or suicidal thoughts include:

- Talking about suicide: like "I'm going to kill myself" or "I wish I were dead"
- Getting the means to take your life, such as buying a gun or stockpiling pills
- Withdrawing contact with others like not responding to any type of communication from others
- Having extreme mood swings
- Being preoccupied with death, dying or violence
- Feeling trapped or hopeless
- Excessively using alcohol or drugs
- Changing your normal routine or patterns
- Drastically changing appearance suddenly
- Doing risky or self-destructive things
- Giving away belongings or getting affairs in order
- Saying goodbye to people as if they won't be seen again
- Developing personality changes

When someone else is suicidal

Is someone says he or she is thinking of suicide or behaves in away that makes you think the person may be suicidal, don't play it down, or ignore the situation. If you're concerned about a friend or loved one, consider these actions, depending on the situation:

- Offer the opportunity to talk about their feelings
- Encourage them to call a mental health or suicide hotline
- Encourage them to seek professional treatment
- Offer to help find the necessary assistance and support

You're not responsible for preventing someone from taking his or her own life—but your support may help the person see that other operations are available to stay safe and get help.

Reach out for help

If you're feeling overwhelmed by thoughts of not wanting to live or you're having urges to attempt suicide, get help now. If you think you may hurt or attempt suicide, get help right away by taking one of these actions:

- Call 911 or your local police department
- Call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline – 1-800-273-8255
- Contact Talk Space at www.talkspace.com/allanmyers
- Contact the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for 5 phone sessions with a licensed therapist – 1(800)437-0911
- Contact your doctor or a mental health professional
- Reach out to a close friend or loved one
- Contact a spiritual leader of someone in your faith community

If you have a topic of interest that you would like to include on this daily communication, please contact Samantha Krebsbach at Samantha.Krebsbach@allanmyers.com.