



World Suicide Prevention Day

Since 2003 the International Association for Suicide Prevention (IASP) in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO) has promoted World Suicide Prevention Day.

The theme for this year is **“Connect. Communicate. Care.”**

- 1. Connect:** Social connectedness reduces the risk of suicide. Connecting people with formal and informal supports may also help to prevent suicide. Fostering connections with those who have lost a loved one to suicide or have been suicidal themselves is crucial to furthering suicide prevention efforts.
- 2. Communicate:** The ability to communicate and interact effectively with those who might be vulnerable to suicide is an important part of any suicide prevention strategy.
- 3. Care:** Governments and health service providers need to prioritize suicide prevention. Communities have a key role to play in caring for vulnerable individuals and those at risk of suicide by effectively supporting their needs.

Overview:

Suicide is a serious public health problem; the number of lives lost each year due to suicide exceeds the number of deaths due to homicide and war combined. Every suicide is a tragedy that affects families, communities, and entire countries.

Suicides are major public health priority, and that are preventable with timely, evidence-based and often low-cost interventions. For national responses to be effective there are needs for multisectoral strategies for suicide prevention.

Globally, over 800 000 people die from suicide every year; and it is the second leading cause of death in 15-29-year-olds. There are indications that for each adult who die of suicide there may have been more than 20 other attempts. More men commit suicides than women, however; more women attempt suicide.

Facts about Suicide in the Americas:

- In the Americas, about 65,000 deaths occur each year from suicide

- The Non-Hispanic Caribbean and North America sub-regions experience the highest rates of suicide
- Male suicide rates remain higher than female rates, accounting for about 79% of all deaths from suicide
- The majority of suicides in the Region occur in persons aged 25-44 (36.8%) and 45-59 (25.6%)
- The reported number of deaths from suicide may be underestimated in many countries
- The primary suicide method in the Region was suffocation, followed by firearms and poisoning
- Suicide rates declined in the older age groups, but increased in some of the younger groups
- Suicide is ranked third among the leading causes of death in persons aged 10-24

Key Risk Factors for Suicide:

- Health System and Society:
 - Barriers to accessing health care
 - Easy availability of the means for suicide
 - Inappropriate media reporting
 - Stigma associated with help-seeking behaviors
- Community and Relationship:
 - Stresses of acculturation and dislocation
 - Sense of isolation and lack of social support
 - Disaster, war and conflicts
 - Trauma or abuse
- Individual:
 - Previous suicide attempts, mental health problems, harmful use of alcohol, financial loss, chronic pain and a family history of suicide

Key Messages:

- Suicides are preventable. For National responses to be effective, a comprehensive multisectoral suicide prevention strategy is needed.
- It is important to identify the risk and protective factors that are related to suicidal behavior.

- An effective strategy for preventing suicides and suicides attempts is to restrict access to the most common means.
- Early identification of mental health problems, harmful use of alcohol and substance use, are key interventions to ensure that people receive the care they need.
- Communities play a critical role in suicide prevention, they can provide social support to vulnerable individuals, fight stigma and support those bereaved by suicide.

PAHO / WHO Technical Cooperation Tools:

Suicide Mortality in the Americas: <http://bit.ly/2a6G9OO>

Preventing Suicide – A Global Imperative: <http://bit.ly/1xeMtl7>

Plan of Action on Mental Health: <http://bit.ly/29rY8yG>

Clinical management of acute pesticide intoxication: <http://bit.ly/2aQCnZy>

mhGap Intervention Guide: <http://bit.ly/2a2luoO>

Mental Health Atlas of the Americas: <http://bit.ly/29n0rlD>

Practice manual for establishing and maintaining surveillance systems for suicide attempts and self-harm: <http://bit.ly/2agOyiq>

Pharmacological treatment of mental disorders in primary health care: <http://bit.ly/2b37UE3>