



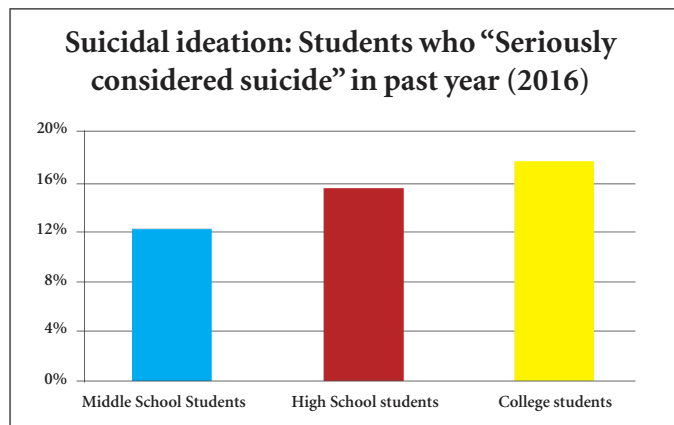
www.arcangelsfoundation.org

636.405.1746

arcangelsfoundation@yahoo.com

Suicide in Missouri: Where We Stand*

- More than 1,000 Missourians died by suicide in 2015.
- Suicide is the 10th leading cause of death both in Missouri and nationally. It is the 2nd leading cause of death among 15-19 year-olds and the 3rd leading cause of death among 10-14 year-olds and 20-24 year-olds.
- Suicide rates in Missouri have been steadily increasing since 1999 and are higher than those nationally. In 2015, Missouri's suicide rate was the 17th highest in the nation with an overall rate of 16.98 per 100,000 (age-adjusted) compared to the national rate of 13.26.
- Suicide was the 3rd leading cause of death in Missouri among youth/young adults ages 10-24 in 2015. In this age group, suicides are highest among 20-24 year-olds.
- Rates have remained relatively unchanged since 1999.



- One out of eight (12.3%) middle school students seriously considered suicide in the past year (Missouri Student Survey (MSS), 2016).
- Among high school students, one in six (15.6%) seriously considered suicide and 7.3% attempted suicide. Ideation rates for females were higher than for males (19% vs. 10.8%) (MSS, 2016).
- Almost one in five college students (17.8%) reported seriously considering suicide in the past year (Missouri Assessment of College Health Behaviors (MACHB), 2016).
- Full-time students ages 18-22 were less likely to attempt suicide than others in their age range (National Survey on Drug Usage and Health (NSDUH), 2013).
- LGBTQ students were more than three times more likely to have had suicidal thoughts than non-LGBTZ youth and were nearly four times as likely to have made a suicide attempt (MACHB, 2016).

Risk Factors for Suicide

- Mental and emotional disorders, particularly depression and other serious mood disorders
- Alcohol and other drug/substance abuse disorders
- Feelings of hopelessness and despair
- Impulsive and aggressive tendencies/behavior
- History of trauma and abuse
- Major physical/medical illness
- Family history of suicide
- Previous suicide attempt
- Job or financial losses
- Loss of a significant relationship
- Lack of support group (peers, friends, family) and abnormal feelings of isolation
- Lack of healthcare (especially mental healthcare)
- Not knowing that there is mental healthcare/counseling readily available

Warning Signs of Suicide

- Talking about wanting to die
- Planning a way to kill oneself
- Talking about feeling hopeless/having no purpose/reason to live
- Talking about feeling trapped
- Talking about being in unbearable pain
- Talking about being a burden to others/feelings of self-blame and shame
- Marked increase in the use of alcohol and/or drugs
- Acting anxious, agitated, irritable, or reckless (risk-taking behavior)
- Insomnia or significant loss of sleep for an extended period
- Withdrawing from friends, family, activities/isolating oneself
- Showing rage and hostile outbursts/talking about seeking revenge
- Displaying extreme mood swings, especially depression and despair

What This Means and What To Do

Risk factors are characteristics that make it more likely that individuals will consider, attempt, or die by suicide. Protective factors however, are characteristics that make it less likely that individuals will consider, attempt, or die by suicide.

Risk and protective factors play a critical role in suicide prevention. Identifying risk and protective factors provides critical information to assess and manage suicide risk in individuals and yields areas of emphasis for interventions that help prevent suicide. Simply stated, decreasing risk factors and increasing protective factors should decrease suicide risk significantly. This is why awareness and intervention is absolutely necessary for prevention.

The bad news is that suicide can't be treated. The ensuing grief and collateral damage to family and friends is incomprehensible and irreversible. Suicide is truly a permanent solution for what could have been a short-term problem.

Teenagers are especially vulnerable, as the emotions they experience are highly charged and magnified. Adults generally have more foresight, along with improved cognitive skills, that allow them to put problems into perspective. Teenagers have limited foresight that often results in reactionary and rapid mood decline and depression, leading to the fatal conclusion that life will never get any better. They often can't see past their emotional pain. This type of hopelessness and despair is a very large red flag, indeed, as it can be so terribly strong that it dominates the willingness to end one's life.

The good news is that suicide awareness and prevention saves lives. Reaching out with intervention is necessary, not a choice. Mandate vs. option is the correct and loving mind-set.

Parents understand how important it is for us to trust our teenagers. We look for appropriate and responsible behavior. We want them to develop kind values, use good judgment, and stay actively involved with family and positive peer relationships. We want them to make good decisions, exercise good choices, and develop a mature sense of accountability for their actions.

However, there is a problem parents often overlook—a crucial yet fundamental necessity in raising teenagers: Our children need to trust us as parents. Teenagers frequently believe that their parents will not be able to handle their problems and strong feelings, so they don't express them or open up about their problems and difficulties. There is a strong reluctance that they will be misunderstood, minimized, or even feel like a burden to their families. So parents, adults, and friends: Listen and respond, but never judge or shame. Keep the rapport positive and solution-oriented. A mind-set alone can save lives. Reach out to professional resources—including family doctors, clergy, educators, mental health professionals, and suicide awareness foundations. These are protective factors that decrease suicide risk.

Finally, if you are sad—talk to someone. Pain shared is pain lessened.

Thank you for reading.

We are A.R.C. Angels Foundation.

Our mission is to save lives.

“A.R.C. Angels Foundation (AAF) exists to save lives by preventing suicide through education and creating awareness.”

If you are experiencing a crisis, call 911 or the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255.