



Help is here

Older adults and suicide

The “golden years” should be a time of relaxing and enjoying hard-earned pleasure. Sadly, it doesn’t always turn out that way.

Would it surprise you to learn that older adults are among the highest risk groups for suicide? While elders make up about 12 percent of the population, they account for 18 percent of all suicide attempts. And when they do attempt suicide, one in four die.¹

Why is the older adult suicide rate so high?

People may attempt suicide for many different reasons. But there are life events commonly associated with older adults that may push some to take desperate action. They can include:

- Loss of loved ones
 - Illness or chronic, debilitating pain
 - Social isolation and loneliness
 - Loss of a sense of purpose
 - Concerns about becoming “a burden” or financial drain
- Any or all these factors can lead to depression, substance or alcohol misuse which can increase their risk even more. Left without help or resources, an older adult may attempt suicide.

¹Rope, Kate. [What to know about suicide rates in older adults](#). Web Md. Accessed August 2021.

Signs to watch for

- Withdrawal from friends, family and favorite activities
- Loss of interest in appearance or hygiene
- Giving away prized possessions

Take it seriously

Anyone who talks about suicide, wanting to die or feeling hopeless needs to be taken seriously. If you or someone you know shows any signs of depression or despair, talk to them.

You can ask them directly if they're considering suicide. If they haven't thought of it already, you won't be giving them the idea. If they are considering it, they'll often be grateful that someone wants to help.

Getting them help

Older adults who are suicidal or very depressed can be helped. There's counseling, medication and other treatments. Social contact, support with daily living, feeling needed and having purpose are all key to turning things around.

If you know someone who may be suicidal, connect them with the National Suicide Hotline at **1-800-273-TALK (8255)**. You can also visit the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration ([SAHMSA](#)) online to learn about more resources. And remember, we're here to help 24/7.



The EAP is administered by Resources For Living, LLC.

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