

## **SUICIDE & MENTAL HEALTH**

According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Prevention:

**MENTAL HEALTH** is defined as “a state of well-being in which the individual realizes his/her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his/her community.” There is emerging evidence that positive mental health is associated with improved physical health outcomes.

Researchers suggest that there are indicators of mental health, representing three domains:

- Emotional well-being – such as perceived life satisfaction, happiness, cheerfulness, peacefulness.
- Psychological well-being – such as self-acceptance, personal growth including openness to new experiences, optimism, hopefulness, purpose in life, control of one’s environment, spirituality, self-direction, and positive relationships.
- Social well-being – such as social acceptance, beliefs in the potential of people and society as a whole, personal self-worth and usefulness to society, sense of community

**MENTAL ILLNESS** is defined as “collectively all diagnosable mental disorders,” or “health conditions that are characterized by alterations in thinking, mood, or behavior associated with distress and/or impaired functioning.”

*Center for Disease Control (CDC) and Prevention*

## **MENTAL ILLNESS & SUICIDE**

Each year suicide claims approximately 30,000 thousand lives in America. Suicidal thoughts and behaviors are a psychiatric emergency requiring immediate intervention to prevent this disastrous event. Some of the mental illnesses most commonly associated with suicide include:

- **DEPRESSION** – many people who commit suicide have experienced depression. Other forms of mental illness also have higher rates of self-harm and suicide. Depression is the most common type of mental illness. It has been estimated that by the year 2020, depression will be the second leading cause of disability trailing only heart disease.
- **PSYCHOSIS** – many people commit suicide because they are distressed and confused as a result of their hallucinations or because they want to get away from the symptoms.

- **DRUGS & ALCOHOL** – misuse of marijuana, heroin, amphetamines, and alcohol is closely related to suicidal behavior.

A suicide attempt may be an early warning sign that a person is developing a mental illness. If this is the case it is important to seek assessment and treatment. As suicidal thoughts or behaviors are a psychiatric emergency, the involvement of properly-trained mental health professionals is necessary. With appropriate intervention, such as medical, counseling, social support and time, if a person has attempted suicide, a doctor or mental health professional can provide education and support.

If you think a friend or relative is at risk, discuss your concerns with the friend or relative openly and non-judgmentally. Also discuss your concerns with relevant professionals, doctors, or a school counselor.

If someone you know is at serious risk of suicide, keep the phone number of a crisis service in case you need urgent help.

- Colorado Crisis Services 1-844-493-8255
- National Suicide Prevention 1-800-273-8255
- 911 for emergency services
- Primary Care Physician
- Children’s Hospital of Colorado 1-800-suicide (784-2433)
- Safe2Tell (to make an anonymous report (1-877-542-7233)

## REFERENCES, RESOURCES TO CONTACT & ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- National Alliance on Mental Illness ([http://www.nami.org/Content/NavigationMenu/Inform\\_Yourself/About\\_Mental\\_Illness/By\\_Illness/Suicide.htm](http://www.nami.org/Content/NavigationMenu/Inform_Yourself/About_Mental_Illness/By_Illness/Suicide.htm))
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – Mental Health Basics ([www.cdc.gov/mentalhealth/basics.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/mentalhealth/basics.htm))
- Mental Health America – Suicide (<http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/suicide>)
- Canadian Mental Health Association – The Relationship Between Suicide & Mental Illness ([http://toronto.cmha.ca/mental\\_health/the-relationship-between-suicide-and-mental-illness/#.VijSW8trtP0](http://toronto.cmha.ca/mental_health/the-relationship-between-suicide-and-mental-illness/#.VijSW8trtP0))
- Better Health Channel – Suicide and Mental Illness (<https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/conditionsandtreatment/suicide-and-mental-illness>)

**If you need immediate assistance contact the  
National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1-800-273-8255  
Colorado Crisis & Support Line 1-844-493-8255**