

# ONLINE GRIEF SUPPORT

Find online support through bereavement communities (including Facebook groups and email support), forums, and chatrooms.

## AARP Grief & Loss Forum

[www.community.aarp.org/t5/Grief-Loss/bd-p/GriefLoss](http://www.community.aarp.org/t5/Grief-Loss/bd-p/GriefLoss)

## Alliance of Hope Community Forum

[allianceofhope.org/find-support/community-forum/](http://allianceofhope.org/find-support/community-forum/)

## Cake Forum

[joincake.com/forum/](http://joincake.com/forum/)

## The Compassionate Friends

[compassionatefriends.org/find-support/online-communities](http://compassionatefriends.org/find-support/online-communities)

## GRASP Facebook Group

[grasphelp.org/community/joining-us-facebook/](http://grasphelp.org/community/joining-us-facebook/)

## Grief Anonymous

[griefanonymous.com/facebook-groups/](http://griefanonymous.com/facebook-groups/)

## Grief Healing Discussion Groups

[griefhealingdiscussiongroups.com](http://griefhealingdiscussiongroups.com)

## Grief In Common

[griefincommon.com](http://griefincommon.com)

## GriefNet.org

[griefnet.org](http://griefnet.org)

## Grieving.com

[forums.grieving.com](http://forums.grieving.com)

## MISS Foundation Online Support Group Forums

[missfoundation.org/grieving/](http://missfoundation.org/grieving/)

## Modern Loss

[modernloss.com](http://modernloss.com)

## My Grief Angels Online Forums

[mygriefangels.org/forums-by-loss.html](http://mygriefangels.org/forums-by-loss.html)

## Online Grief Support

[onlinegriefsupport.com](http://onlinegriefsupport.com)

## Open To Hope

[opentohope.com](http://opentohope.com)

## Pet Loss Grief Support Message Board

[petlossmessageboard.com](http://petlossmessageboard.com)

## TAPS

[taps.org/onlinecommunity](http://taps.org/onlinecommunity)

## Widowed Village

[soaringspirits.org/programs/widowed-village/](http://soaringspirits.org/programs/widowed-village/)

## Widowers on Reddit

[reddit.com/r/widowers/](http://reddit.com/r/widowers/)

## Virtual Grief Support (Nationwide)

Actively Moving Forward

First Candle

GriefShare ([griefshare.org](http://griefshare.org))

Hand to Hold

Rainbows

## Benefits of Quitting Smoking

### Quitting smoking will:

- Improve the quality of your life
- Improve circulation and lung function
- Make climbing stairs easier
- Lower your risk of diabetes
- Help wounds to heal more quickly
- Reduce the amount needed of some medications
- Support your recovery from alcohol and other drugs
- Improve the health of your family and friends
- Set a good example for your children
- Save you money
- Provide more employment options



### Many people that smoke want to quit:

- Quitting smoking can be hard, but there are ways to make it easier.
- People who use support and quit-smoking medicines together are three times as likely to quit for good!
- It is never too late to quit.

## What You Can Do To Stay Healthy

### Stay healthy at any age. Remember to:

- Eat healthily
- Quit smoking
- Manage stress
- Be physically active
- See your doctor for a yearly physical
- Maintain a healthy weight
- Control your cholesterol, blood pressure, and blood sugar
- Get at least 7 hours of sleep nightly



### Additional steps to take:

- Talk to your health care providers about your health and your concerns.
- Include in your recovery plan ways to quit smoking, eat healthily, be active and manage stress.
- Visit the UMass Department of Psychiatry Wellness Webpage for more information to help you reach your health goals.

[www.umassmed.edu/psychiatry/resources/wellness/](http://www.umassmed.edu/psychiatry/resources/wellness/)

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## UMass Psychiatry Wellness Initiative

Overall Health  
is Important to  
Mental Health



### Improve the quality of your life!

Quitting smoking, being active, healthy eating and managing stress can help your body and mind!

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Department of Psychiatry  
University of Massachusetts Medical School  
UMass Memorial Health Care



## Benefits of Managing Stress

When it becomes difficult to cope with life's challenges, we may start to show signs of stress, such as:

- Headaches
- Muscle tension
- Fatigue
- Fast heartbeat
- Low self-esteem
- Depression
- Anger
- Panic attacks
- Phobias
- Overeating
- Drinking or smoking
- Sleep problems
- Obsessive behavior



Managing stress can reduce or even eliminate these negative effects.

**Ways to reduce or eliminate the negative signs of stress include:**

- Meditation
- Deep breathing
- Guided imagery, visualization
- Tightening and relaxing muscles
- Physical activity

## Benefits of Healthy Eating

The foods we choose to eat and the way that they are prepared affect our physical and mental health.

**Good nutrition can:**

- Increase energy
- Balance mood
- Increase feelings of well-being
- Help manage chronic conditions, such as diabetes and migraine headaches
- Improve sleep
- Help control weight
- Decrease the risk of heart disease, stroke, and some types of cancer



**Remember to:**

- Fill half your plate with fruits and vegetables
- Drink fat free (skim) or 1% milk
- Eat more whole grain foods
- Vary your protein sources - for example substitute pinto or black beans for meat in chili or tacos
- Choose foods with less sugar and salt
- Pick unsaturated fat (olive, canola or safflower oil) over saturated or trans fat
- Eat the right amount of calories for you
- Drink plenty of water

## Benefits of Physical Activity

**30 minutes (or three, 10-minute blocks) of physical activity each day can:**

- Improve mood, less depression
- Help control weight
- Decrease stress and anxiety
- Increase energy
- Improve attention
- Improve sleep
- Increase heart and lung capacity
- Improve bone density
- Increase muscle strength
- Decrease the risk of heart disease, stroke, and many types of cancer

**Examples of physical activities:**

- Walk briskly
- Mow the grass
- Dance
- Take the stairs instead of the elevator
- Park at the far end of the parking lot and walk
- March in place during TV commercials
- Get off the bus one stop early and walk the rest of the way



Any activity that increases heart rate is considered physical activity.

# Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD):

## More Than the Winter Blues

As the days get shorter and there is less daylight, you may start to feel sad. While many people experience the “winter blues,” some people may have a type of depression called seasonal affective disorder (SAD).

The first step is to determine how much your symptoms interfere with your daily life.

### Do you have mild symptoms that have lasted less than 2 weeks?



- Feeling down but still able to take care of yourself and others
- Having some trouble sleeping
- Having less energy than usual but still able to do your job, schoolwork, or housework

### These activities can make you feel better:



- Doing something you enjoy
- Going outside in the sunlight
- Spending time with family and friends
- Eating healthy and avoiding foods with lots of sugar

If these activities do not help or your symptoms are getting worse, talk to a health care provider.

### Do you have more severe symptoms that have lasted more than 2 weeks?



- Social withdrawal
- Oversleeping
- Gaining weight
- Craving foods with lots of sugar like cakes, candies, and cookies

### Seek professional help:



- Light therapy
- Psychotherapy (talk therapy)
- Medications
- Vitamin D supplements

For help finding treatment, visit [nimh.nih.gov/findhelp](https://nimh.nih.gov/findhelp).

If you or someone you know is in immediate distress or is thinking about hurting themselves, call or text the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline at **988** or chat at [988lifeline.org](https://988lifeline.org).





# I'M SO STRESSED OUT!

## Is it stress or anxiety?

### Stress

- Generally is a response to an *external* cause, such as taking a big test or arguing with a friend.
- Goes away once the situation is resolved.
- Can be positive or negative. For example, it may inspire you to meet a deadline, or it may cause you to lose sleep.

### Both Stress and Anxiety

Both stress and anxiety can affect your mind and body. You may experience symptoms such as:

- Excessive worry
- Uneasiness
- Tension
- Headaches or body pain
- High blood pressure
- Loss of sleep

### Anxiety

- Generally is *internal*, meaning it's your reaction to stress.
  - Usually involves a persistent feeling of apprehension or dread that doesn't go away, and that interferes with how you live your life.
- Is constant, even if there is no immediate threat.

## Ways to Cope

- Keep a journal.
- Download an app with relaxation exercises.
- Exercise and eat healthy.
- Get regular sleep.
- Avoid excess caffeine.
- Identify and challenge your negative thoughts.
- Reach out to your friends or family.

## Find Help

If you are struggling to cope, or the symptoms of your stress or anxiety begin to interfere with your everyday life, it may be time to talk to a professional. Find more information about getting help on the National Institute of Mental Health website at [www.nimh.nih.gov/findhelp](http://www.nimh.nih.gov/findhelp).



National Institute  
of Mental Health

[nimh.nih.gov/stressand anxiety](http://nimh.nih.gov/stressand anxiety)

NIMH Identifier No. OM 20-4319



# Preventing Suicide

## Suicide is a leading cause of death.

Suicide is death caused by injuring oneself with the intent to die. A suicide attempt is when someone harms themselves with any intent to end their life, but they do not die as a result of their actions.

Many factors can increase the risk for suicide or protect against it. Suicide is connected to other forms of injury and violence. For example, people who have experienced violence, including child abuse, bullying, or sexual violence have a higher suicide risk. Being connected to family and community support and having easy access to health care can decrease suicidal thoughts and behaviors.

## Suicide is a serious public health problem.

Suicide rates increased 30% between 2000–2018, and declined in 2019 and 2020. Suicide is a leading cause of death in the United States, with 45,979 deaths in 2020. This is about one death every 11 minutes. The number of people who think about or attempt suicide is even higher. In 2020, an estimated 12.2 million American adults seriously thought about suicide, 3.2 million planned a suicide attempt, and 1.2 million attempted suicide.

**Suicide affects all ages.** In 2020, suicide was among the top 9 leading causes of death for people ages 10–64. Suicide was the 2<sup>nd</sup> leading cause of death for people ages 10–14 and 25–34.

**Some groups have higher suicide rates than others.** Suicide rates vary by race/ethnicity, age, and other factors, such as where someone lives. By race/ethnicity, the groups with the highest rates were non-Hispanic American Indian/Alaska Native and non-Hispanic White populations. Other Americans with higher than average rates of suicide are veterans, people who live in rural areas, and workers in certain industries and occupations like mining and construction. Young people who identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual have higher rates of suicidal thoughts and behavior compared to their peers who identify as heterosexual.



Nearly  
**46,000**  
people died by  
suicide in 2020



**1** death every  
**11** minutes

**Many adults think about  
suicide or attempt suicide**

**12.2 million**  
Seriously thought about suicide

**3.2 million**  
Made a plan for suicide

**1.2 million**  
Attempted suicide

If you or someone you know is in crisis, please contact the  
**National Suicide Prevention Lifeline**

- Call 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
- Use the [online Lifeline Crisis Chat](#)

Both are free and confidential. You'll be connected to a skilled, trained counselor in your area. For more information, visit the [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#). You can also connect 24/7 to a crisis counselor by texting the [Crisis Text Line](#). Text HOME to 741741.





## Suicide has far-reaching impacts.

Suicide and suicide attempts cause serious emotional, physical, and economic impacts. People who attempt suicide and survive may experience serious injuries that can have long-term effects on their health. They may also experience depression and other mental health concerns. The good news is that more than 90% of people who attempt suicide and survive never go on to die by suicide.

Suicide and suicide attempts affect the health and well-being of friends, loved ones, co-workers, and the community. When people die by suicide, their surviving family and friends may experience shock, anger, guilt, symptoms of depression or anxiety, and may even experience thoughts of suicide themselves.

The financial toll of suicide on society is also costly. In 2019, suicide and nonfatal self-harm cost the nation nearly \$490 billion in medical costs, work loss costs, value of statistical life, and quality of life costs.

## Suicide can be prevented.

Suicide is preventable and everyone has a role to play to save lives and create healthy and strong individuals, families, and communities. Suicide prevention requires a comprehensive public health approach.

CDC developed [Preventing Suicide: A Technical Package of Policy, Programs, and Practices \(also available in Spanish\)](#), which provides information on the best available evidence for suicide prevention. States and communities can use the technical package to help make decisions about suicide prevention activities. Strategies range from those designed to support people at increased risk to a focus on the whole population, regardless of risk.

### Strategies to Prevent Suicide



#### Strengthen economic supports

- Strengthen household financial security
- Housing stabilization policies



#### Strengthen access to and delivery of suicide care

- Coverage of mental health conditions in health insurance policies
- Reduce provider shortages in underserved areas
- Safer suicide care through system change



#### Create protective environments

- Reduce access to lethal means among persons at risk for suicide
- Organizational policies and culture
- Community-based policies to reduce excessive alcohol use



#### Promote connectedness

- Peer norm programs
- Community engagement activities



#### Teach coping and problem-solving skills

- Social-emotional learning programs
- Parenting skill and family relationship programs



#### Identify and support people at risk

- Gatekeeper training
- Crisis intervention
- Treatment for people at risk of suicide
- Treatment to prevent re-attempts



#### Lessen harms and prevent future risk

- Postvention
- Safe reporting and messaging about suicide

# My Mental Health: Do I Need Help?

First, determine how much your symptoms interfere with your daily life.



## Do I have mild symptoms that have lasted for less than 2 weeks?

- Feeling a little down
- Feeling down, but still able to do job, schoolwork, or housework
- Some trouble sleeping
- Feeling down, but still able to take care of yourself or take care of others



## If so, here are some self-care activities that can help:

- Exercising (e.g., aerobics, yoga)
- Engaging in social contact (virtual or in person)
- Getting adequate sleep on a regular schedule
- Eating healthy
- Talking to a trusted friend or family member
- Practicing meditation, relaxation, and mindfulness

**If the symptoms above do not improve or seem to be worsening despite self-care efforts, talk to your health care provider.**



## Do I have severe symptoms that have lasted 2 weeks or more?

- Difficulty sleeping
- Appetite changes that result in unwanted weight changes
- Struggling to get out of bed in the morning because of mood
- Difficulty concentrating
- Loss of interest in things you usually find enjoyable
- Unable to perform usual daily functions and responsibilities
- Thoughts of death or self-harm



## Seek professional help:

- Psychotherapy (talk therapy)—virtual or in person; individual, group, or family
- Medications
- Brain stimulation therapies

**For help finding treatment, visit [nimh.nih.gov/findhelp](https://www.nimh.nih.gov/findhelp).**

**If you are in crisis, call or text the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline at 988 or chat at [988lifeline.org](https://988lifeline.org), or text the Crisis Text Line (text HELLO to 741741).**



[nimh.nih.gov/findhelp](https://www.nimh.nih.gov/findhelp)