

Introduction



- Primary Prevention Specialist
 - o Integrated Primary Prevention Program (IP3)
 - o FL Air National Guard
 - 101st Air and Space Operations Group (AOG) @ Tyndall AFB, FL
- Education
 - o Master of Public Health (MPH), concentration in Community Health Education
 - o Bachelor of Science, Healthcare Administration
 - Associate of Applied Science, Health Information Technology



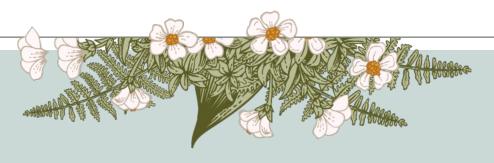
What I Do



- Prevention of harmful behaviors in military community
 - o Suicide
 - Violence
 - Workplace
 - Domestic
 - o Stress
- Resource linkage

- Prevention activities to come
 - Resiliency
 - Connectedness
 - o Financial readiness
 - o Transformational moral leadership
 - o Self-awareness and regulation

Objectives



- Identify suicide risk factors and warning signs.
- Explain why reducing access to lethal means is critical for suicide prevention.
- Discuss secure firearms storage.
- Discuss ways to limit access to medications.

Suicide Stats



Over



48,000

people died by suicide in 2021



1 death every

11 minutes

Many adults think about suicide or attempt suicide

12.3 million

Seriously thought about suicide

3.5 million

Made a plan for suicide

1.7 million

Attempted suicide

If you or someone you know is in crisis, please contact the

988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline

- Call or text 988
- Chat at 988lifeline.org



Suicide Stats, cont.



- Disproportionately impacted populations
 - o Veterans
 - o Rural inhabitants
 - o Certain occupations
 - Military
 - o Transition periods
 - Active duty military to civilian
 - High school to college
 - Psych hospitalization to outpatient care

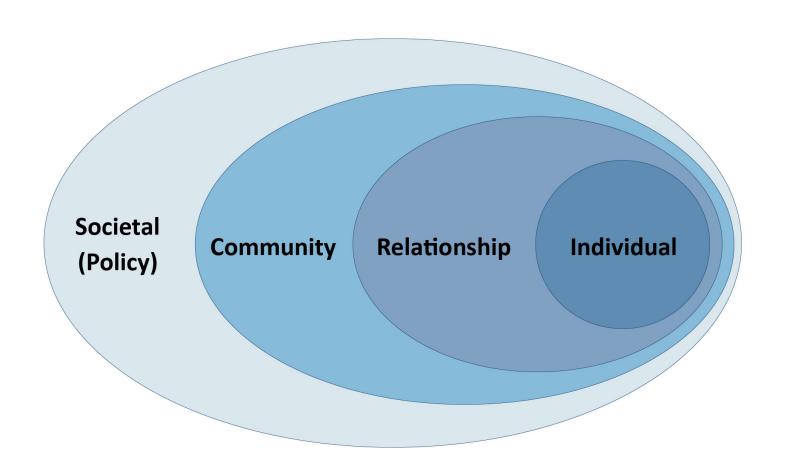




Risk Factors for Suicide

Risk Factors for Suicide: Social Ecological Model





Risk Factors for Suicide: Individual



- Mental health conditions
- Previous suicide attempt
- Physical disability or illness
- Substance use
- Stressful life events
 - Legal
 - Financial



Risk Factors for Suicide: Relationship



- Relationship problems
- History of family violence
- Adverse childhood experiences
- Sexual violence
- Bullying
- Social isolation
- Loss of loved one



Risk Factors for Suicide: Community/Environmental

- Lack of access to resources
 - o Job opportunities
 - o Adequate housing
 - o Healthcare services
- Suicide cluster in community/Exposure to another person's suicide
- Access to lethal means
 - o Firearms
 - o Drugs



Risk Factors for Suicide: Societal



- Economic decline
- Stigma (mental illness and seeking help)
- Media portrayals of suicide
- Access to lethal means
 Policy level





Risk Factors for Suicide: Societal, cont.

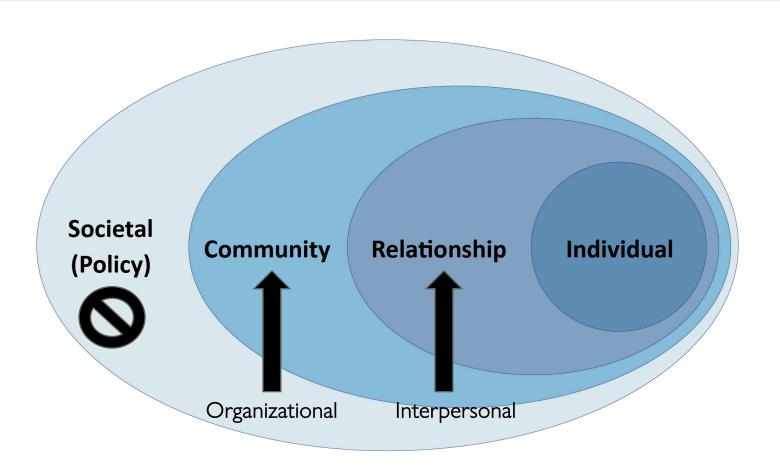




Air Force Identifies 25-Year-Old
Cyber Specialist as Airman Who Set
Himself on Fire in Front of DC
Embassy

The Military Social Ecological Model





Risk Factors Unique to Military



Mental Health Conditions

- o Exposure to combat and high-stress environments
- o Higher rates of mental health diagnoses
 - Depression
 - Anxiety
 - Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)

Military Culture

- Toughness
- Resiliency
- Service members perceive a stigma attached to seeking mental health services
- o Express concerns that seeking care will impact career

Risk Factors Unique to Military, cont.



Substance Use

- Elevated risk of death by suicide among people with substance use disorders
- o Illicit drug use not as prevalent in the military
- o Surveys have shown that a higher percentage of military personnel report heavy alcohol use compared to similar civilian cohorts

Access to Firearms

- Studies have shown having a loaded firearm in the home increases the risk of suicide death 4-6x.
- Service members may have more exposure to firearms than civilian population
- Firearms most common method of suicide death among military

Suicide Stats - Military (2021)



National Guard

- 117 deaths
- Using a firearm 76.1%

Active Duty

- 328 deaths
- Using a firearm 67.1%

Reserve

- 74 deaths
- Using a firearm 74.3%

Suicide Warning Signs



- Behavior changes
 - Withdrawing from family/friends
 - o Giving away things
 - o Extreme mood swings
 - Anxious
 - o Agitation
 - o Anger/rage
 - o Eating habits
 - o Sleeping issues



Suicide Warning Signs, cont.



- Talking about
 - o Being a burden
 - o Wanting to die
 - o Feeling empty or hopeless
 - o Unbearable pain
 - Emotional
 - Physical
- Increased substance use

- Making a plan for suicide
 - o Searching online
 - Newly acquired lethal items (firearm, etc.)
- Taking risks
- Giving away important possessions
- Putting affairs in order



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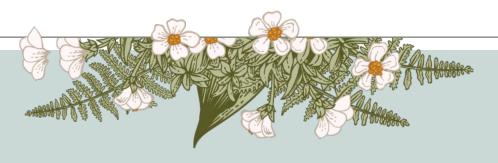
...how a person attempts suicide—in particular, the method used—can determine whether that individual lives or dies.

99

(Counseling on Access to Lethal Means, 2018)



Poll



What do you think is the most common method used in suicide attempts?

- a) Overdose
- b) Cutting
- c) Firearms
- d) Jumping
- e) Suffocation/hanging
- f) Gas inhalation



"A suicide attempt by firearm is nearly always lethal and does not provide the opportunity to change one's mind or abort the attempt. As such, addressing a suicidal individual's access to firearms can mean the difference between life and death." (Counseling on Access to Lethal Means, 2018)



Means Reduction



Reduce access to methods used to attempt suicide

Saves lives by decreasing likelihood that a suicide attempt will be fatal

Lethality



- Lethality of method used in suicide attempt is the biggest factor in determining whether the person lives or dies.
- Some methods used in suicide attempts are far more lethal than others.
- Method is considered lethal if high proportion of attempts by that method end in death.

Firearms



- Used in roughly half of all suicide deaths
- Highly lethal
- Irreversible
- Easily accessible in many homes
- Gun owners can voluntarily take steps to reduce access
 - Safe firearm storage



Storing Firearms Outside the Home



Family/Friends

o Storing firearms with a trusted person is a great option.

Shooting Ranges

- o Shooting ranges may offer locker rentals.
- o Guns should be unloaded and locked.

Gun Shops

o Some gun shops may offer storage services.

Self-Storage Rental Units

- o Many facilities allow firearm storage.
- o Guns should be unloaded and locked.

Storing Firearms Outside the Home, cont.



Law Enforcement

o Some law enforcement agencies may temporarily store firearms for safety purposes.



Storing Firearms Inside the Home



- Store in a gun safe or lock box
 - o Lock guns, unloaded, in a gun safe or lock box.
- Remove a component
 - o Remove a key component (e.g. slides or firing pins) and lock them up or store them away from the home.



Storing Firearms Inside the Home, cont.



Use gun locks

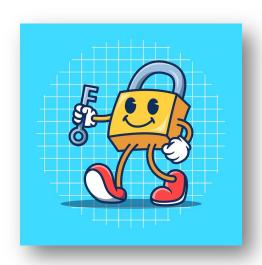
o Locks aren't as safe as locking in a secure gun safe, but they are better than not locking at all, and when used in conjunction with a safe, can provide an additional layer of protection.



Storing Firearms Inside the Home, cont.



- Change the combination or key
 - o If guns are already locked, change the combination or key location.
- Remove ammunition
 - o Remove ammunition from all firearms.
 - o Keep all ammunition out of the home if possible, or locked separately.



Storing Firearms Inside the Home, cont.



- Hiding guns at home not recommended since family members often know hiding places
- Use "triple safety" when storing firearms at home home
 - Locked
 - o Unloaded
 - o Ammunition locked up separately.

**Ideally, guns should be stored away from the home while an individual is at risk.

Medication Overdose



- Medication overdoses are not as lethal as firearms, but some medications are very lethal.
- It is possible for someone to stop an overdose mid-attempt or be rescued.
- Easily accessible in most homes.



Reducing Access to Medications



- Keep medications stored in lockbox
- Keep accessible safe quantities that do not pose lethal threat
- Safe, proper medication disposal
 - o Drug take-back programs (FDA)
 - o Self-disposal
- Keep Narcan on hand (for those using opioids)





Protective Factors



- Resiliency skills
- Coping skills
- Social skills (decision making, problem solving, anger management, etc.)
- Reasons for living (family, friends, pets, etc.)
- Strong, supportive relationships
- Connectedness
- Access to resources (healthcare, etc.)
- Limited access to lethal means
- Cultural, religious, or moral objections to suicide



Suicide Prevention Strategies



- Strengthen economic supports
- Create protective environments
- Improve access to and delivery of mental health services
- Promote healthy connections
- Teach coping and problem-solving skills
- Identify and support people at risk
- Lessen harms and prevent future risk

What You Can Do



- Be alert
 - o Risk factors
 - Warning signs
- Be supportive
 - o Express your love and concern
 - o Be understanding and respectful
 - Reassure

- Urge to stay away from substances
- Remove lethal means from home, if possible
- Connect with resources

Take all behavior signs related to suicide seriously!

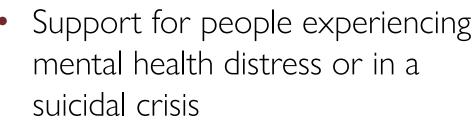




988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline







- 0 24/7
- o Free
- Confidential
- o Crisis resources
- Call or text 988
- Chat online @ 988lifeline.org
- Veterans/Military Crisis Line:
 Call 988 and Press 1



Contact Information





Jen Sonne, MPH, D-CPPP (pending)

Primary Prevention Specialist

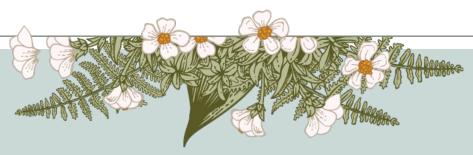
101 AOG

Tyndall AFB, FL

229-464-3709

jwingertsahn@gmail.com (Govt email access pending)

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