



## AWARENESS

# SUICIDE PREVENTION – HELPING THOSE IN PAIN

“One in every 100 deaths worldwide is the result of suicide.” These are the sobering facts about suicide reported by the International Association of Suicide Prevention (IASP).

An event described as “devastating” and “can affect and impact every one of us”. September 10 marks World Suicide Prevention Day, aimed at raising awareness and preventing suicide and suicide attempts.

The IASP says “...our actions, no matter how big or small, may provide hope to those struggling”, and as “key players”, we can all make a difference through our actions in reaching out.

### Cause and impact

Various factors contribute to people’s decision to commit suicide. A Verywell Mind article reviewed by psychiatrist Carly Snyder says the most common influence is depression – “a chronic feeling of emptiness, sadness, or inability to feel pleasure,” explains Medical News Today.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) says suicide is connected to other underlying factors, such as “...people who have experienced violence, including child abuse, bullying, or sexual violence, have a higher suicide risk”.

Suicide and attempts “cause serious emotional, physical, and economic impacts”. Fortunately, the CDC says, “...more than 90% of people who attempt suicide and survive never go on to die by suicide.”

### Helping those in need

The Mayo Clinic shares these ways to support those at risk:

#### 1. Notice the warning signs

You can’t always know when someone is considering suicide. But there are warning signs, which include isolation and withdrawal from social contact; talks of suicide; fixation with death or dying; engaging in risky behaviour; drastic change in routine, and bidding farewell as though they won’t be seen again.

#### 2. Ask questions (compassionately)

To gauge whether a person may act on suicidal feelings, gently initiate a conversation with them by asking how they feel: e.g., “Do you ever feel like giving up?” or “Do you ever think about suicide or have you tried to harm yourself before?”.

Asking about suicidal thoughts doesn’t make a person do something self-destructive; instead, getting them to “talk about feelings may reduce the risk of acting on suicidal feelings”.

#### 3. Offer support

Encourage those who feel alone and hopeless to seek professional treatment and offer assistance in helping them find the help they need. Listen to how they feel, don’t judge or dismiss their feelings, and reassure them that things can get better and that help is available.