

95%

of all suicides occur at the peak of a depressive episode*

75%

of all suicides give some indication or warning to a family member or friend**

Recognising the risk factors of suicide and learning about protective factors is the first step to suicide prevention. Being able to recognise the warning signs of suicide and how to take action in such an instance could also save a loved one's life.



Suicide Risk Factors



The risk factors of suicide are what might increase the likelihood of suicide, and these include:

Protective Factors



These reduce the impact of the risk factors:



- Effective health care
- Easy access to support
- Family and community support
- Support from ongoing medical and mental health care relationships



- Skills in problem solving
- Cultural and religious beliefs that discourage suicide



- Previous suicide attempts
- Mental disorders/barriers to accessing mental health treatment/unwillingness to seek help because of the stigma attached to mental health
 - Physical illness
- Local epidemics of suicide



- Alcohol and substance abuse
- Family history of suicide
- Feelings of hopelessness
 - Loss
 - Isolation



- Impulsive and/or aggressive tendencies
- Easy access to lethal methods
- Influence of significant people
- Cultural and religious beliefs

What to do for a loved one who's suicidal



- Take it seriously
- Ask them
- Listen
- Don't keep it a secret
- Offer on-going support

*The Journal of the American Medical Association
**South African Depression and Anxiety Group

Please contact your EWP for support



Suicide Warning Signs

Take action if these depressive symptoms have been present nearly every day for two or more weeks:

- Depressed mood
- Agitated behaviour and sleeplessness
- Change in appetite or weight
- Speaking or moving with unusual speed or slowness
- Fatigue or loss of energy
- Feelings of worthlessness, self-reproach or guilt
- Feelings of loneliness and isolation
- Thoughts of death or suicide



- Neglect of personal welfare
- Make statements about no longer living
- Talk like they are going away or saying goodbye
- Write about suicide or death
- Act irresponsibly or recklessly
- Give away possessions
- Set their affairs in order
- Suddenly cheer up after a period of depression

