**Suicide & Risk Factors for Middle-aged Men**

Suicide is a major and ongoing public health concern. It is the tenth leading cause of death in the United States. The middle-aged years, considered from 35 – 64, make up 19% of US population but accounts for just over 40% of those who die by suicides.Suicide is the fourth leading cause of death among people 35 to 44 years of age and the fifth leading cause among people ages 45–54. While [more women than men](https://www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/reports/national-strategy-suicide-prevention/full-report.pdf) have suicidal thoughts and attempt suicide, men are more likely to die by suicide. Across all age groups, white males account for seven out of 10 suicides. **Those living in rural areas have a** higher suicide rates compared with urban areas. Among males, the highest suicide rates are for individuals in the occupational groups: farming, fishing, and forestry; construction and extraction; and installation, maintenance, and repair. Men with only a high school education are twice as likely to die by suicide compared with those with a college degree and individuals with limited financial resources are disproportionately affected by other risk factors for suicide such as chronic disease and disability and lack of access to effective health and behavioral health care.

**What are seen as some of the causes of the increase suicide rate among middle-aged men?**

* an increase in untreated mental disorders including bi-polar disorder, depression, anxiety because treatment is not sought out or not available; also lack of access to effective behavioral health services;
* substance abuse especially opioids;
* a reluctance to reach out for help/services often associated with the cultural expectations about masculine identity and behavior;
* the Great Recession which resulted in a loss of jobs and hope in the future; middle-aged males who are closer to retirement increases during economic downturns; also work related issues involving downsizing and outsourcing resulting in an inability to provide especially if it involves multiple job losses and is associated with a decrease in self-esteem and self-worth;
* the perception that “things just aren’t panning out”;
* access to lethal means, especially firearms and medications;
* Divorce often initiated by the wife because of infidelity or intimate partner violence, loss of custody of children, and other relationship issues have the potential to trigger suicides of men in the middle aged years.
* Being arrested and booked for a criminal offense in the past 12 months
* increased social isolation;
* The rise of social media/internet and cyberbullying;
* Veterans in the middle years have a higher suicide rate than their peers who have not served in the military and is likely may be related to (a) trauma associated with combat, (b) interpersonal issues associated with deployment and re-entry into civilian life, (c) the demographics of the all-volunteer army, (d) homelessness and unemployment.
* Gay, bisexual, and transgender men and those who do not conform to standard gender roles in the middle years may be more at risk for suicide than other men of their age.

**If you may be thinking about suicide:**

* Call a close friend or family member to help you
* Remove any objects that could be used in a suicide attempt (guns, knives, medications, etc.)
* Try to get an appointment with a care provider (therapist, psychiatrist, primary care provider) that day, or sometime soon in the future.
* If there are medical concerns or there is an issue with being intoxicated, ask someone or call a cab and go to the nearest emergency room.

**If someone you know may be thinking about suicide:**

* Ask them directly if they are thinking about suicide/killing themselves
* Ask them if they have access to any firearm and if you can remove/store it for them.
* Ask them if they have any medication that might be used and if you could hold it for them.
* Listen without judging, and give them plenty of time to talk. Show them you care
* Find out the person’s reasons for living, try to instill HOPE
* Call a close friend or family member, their pastor to help you
* Stay with the person until help is in place, they are with another caring person or in a safe place
* If there are medical concerns or there is an issue with being intoxicated, take them to the nearest emergency room
* Call 911 if you are worried about the person hurting him/ herself immediately.

**DON’T try to handle this alone; call for help!**

**Resources**

* In an emergency call **911**
* For immediate help call your local County Crisis Line \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* The National Crisis Lifeline **1-800-273- 8255 (TALK) Press # 1 if a veteran or send a text message to 838255 -** Support for deaf and hard of hearing: 1-800-799-4889
* If you have an EAP through work call it. The number is: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Check with your Human Resources Department at work, ask about mental health benefits in your health care policy. If you are receiving Badger Care, contact your health insurer. Ask about your coverage and whether they have a network of preferred providers for you to use.

**Treatment is effective and helpful**