



AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF SUICIDOLOGY

Dedicated to the Understanding and Prevention of Suicide

IF YOU ARE CONSIDERING SUICIDE

The last thing that most people expect is that they will run out of reasons to live. But if you are experiencing suicidal thoughts, you need to know that you're not alone. By some estimates, as many as one in six people will become seriously suicidal at some point in their lives. Fortunately, most people do not act on their suicidal thoughts – crises pass and problems are solved. But sometimes thoughts lead to self-harm.

Some Important Facts AAS Would Like to Share with You

Suicidal thinking is usually associated with problems that can be treated. Clinical depression, anxiety disorders, chemical dependency, and other disorders produce profound emotional distress. They also interfere with effective problem-solving. But you need to know that new treatments are available, and studies show that the vast majority of people who receive appropriate treatment improve or recover completely. Even if you have received treatment before, you should know that different treatments work better for different people in different situations. Several tries are sometimes necessary before the right combination is found.

If you are unable to think of solutions other than suicide, it is not that solutions don't exist, only that you are currently unable to see them. Therapists and counselors (and sometimes friends) can help you to see solutions that otherwise are not apparent to you.

Suicidal crises are almost always temporary. Although it might seem as if your unhappiness will never end, it is important to realize that crises are usually time-limited. Solutions are found, feelings change, unexpected positive events occur. Suicide is sometimes referred to as “a permanent solution to a temporary problem.” Don't let suicide rob you of better times that will come your way when you allow more time to pass.

Problems are seldom as great as they appear at first glance. Job loss, financial problems, loss of important people in our lives – all such stressful events can seem catastrophic at the time they are happening. Then, month or years later, they usually look smaller and more manageable. Sometimes, imagining ourselves “five years down the road” can help us to see that a problem that currently seems catastrophic will pass and that we will survive.

Reasons for living can help sustain a person in pain. A famous psychologist once conducted a study of Nazi concentration camp survivors, and found that those who survived almost always reported strong beliefs about what was important in life. You, too, might be able to strengthen your connection with life if you consider what has sustained you through hard times in the past. Family ties, religion, love of art or nature, and dreams for the future are just a few of the many aspects of life that provide meaning and gratification, but which we can lose sight of due to emotional distress.

Do not keep suicidal thoughts to yourself! Help is available for you, whether through a friend, therapist, or member of the clergy. Find someone you trust and let them know how bad things are. This can be your first step on the road to healing.

Telephone Numbers for More Information on Receiving Help

National Mental Health Association	703-684-7722
Anxiety Disorders Association of America	301-231-9350
American Psychological Association	202-336-5500
American Psychiatric Association	202-682-6000
Depressive and Manic-Depressive Association	312-642-0049
National Alliance for the Mentally Ill	703-524-7600
National Suicide Prevention Lifeline	800-273-TALK (800-273-8255)

Other web sites to visit:

The Samaritans (<http://www.samaritans.org.uk/>)

Psych Central (<http://www.grohol.com/helpme.htm>)

Metanoia (<http://www.metanoia.org/suicide/>)

Befrienders International (<http://www.befrienders.org>)

American Association of Suicidology

The goal of the American Association of Suicidology (AAS) is to understand and prevent suicide. AAS promotes research, public awareness programs, education, and training for professionals, survivors, and all interested persons. AAS serves as a national clearinghouse for information on suicide. AAS has many resources and publications that are available to its membership and the general public. For membership information, please contact:

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