



Suicide has become a public health crisis and must be confronted as such: openly, loudly, and continually.

**END THE SILENCE.  
SMASH THE STIGMA.**

### WORLDWIDE:

- There are 800,000 suicide deaths annually.<sup>1</sup>
- Every 40 seconds, someone dies by suicide.<sup>1</sup>
- Global suicide rates have increased 60% in the past 45 years.<sup>2</sup>

### IN THE US:

- LGBTQ+ youth are three times more likely to attempt suicide.<sup>1</sup>
- Suicides have increased by 40% since 1970.<sup>3</sup>
- An average of 125 suicides take place each day.<sup>2</sup>
- Between 2007 and 2018, suicide rates for people 10-24 years old has increased 57%.<sup>4</sup>
- For every 25 attempts, one person dies by suicide.<sup>1</sup>
- For every 4 attempts by the elderly, one person dies by suicide.<sup>3</sup>
- In 2020, there were nearly 46,000 US deaths by suicide, a 55% increase since 2000.<sup>1</sup>
- In 2018, the economic cost for suicide and self-injury in the U.S. was almost \$70 billion.<sup>3</sup>
- Suicide is known as the 'Silent Epidemic' because the stigma surrounding suicide and misinformation about contagion historically prevents coverage in the media.

### IN MASSACHUSETTS:

- Suicide is the second leading cause of death for people 10-34 years old.<sup>4</sup>
- 77% of suicide victims are men.<sup>1</sup>
- One person dies by suicide every 12 hours.<sup>4</sup>
- More than six times as many people die by suicide than by alcohol related motor vehicle accidents each year.<sup>4</sup>

### ON THE CAPE AND ISLANDS:

- In 2020, there were 34 deaths by suicide.<sup>3</sup>
- Between 2019-2020, Barnstable County saw a 48% increase in suicide rates.<sup>3</sup>
- The suicide rate for youth on the Cape & Islands is twice the state average.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Suicide Awareness Voices of Education (SAVE) <sup>2</sup> World Health Organization <sup>3</sup> Center for Disease Control <sup>4</sup> American Foundation for Suicide Prevention

## HOPE...

Text HOME to 741741

1-800-273-8255

### NATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION LIFELINE

Get connected to trained counselors who will listen, provide support, and connect you to resources. Calling 988 will also route callers to the LifeLine beginning July 2022.

## HOW CAN YOU HELP SMASH THE STIGMA?

### TALK OPENLY ABOUT BRAIN HEALTH

Consider these words by Michelle Obama: “At the root of this dilemma is the way we view mental health in this country. Whether an illness affects your heart, your leg or your brain, it’s still an illness and there should be no distinction.” Mental health and wellness needs to be as accepted & discussed as openly as physical health and wellness. Remember: an illness is an illness. There should be no distinction. No judgement. No stigma.

### REMOVE THE WORD "COMMIT" WHEN TALKING ABOUT SUICIDE

People commit crimes, not illnesses. People don’t commit cancer or depression. They may die of cancer. They may die of depression. Say instead, “died by suicide”. Get rid of commit - commit maintains stigma.

### RECOGNIZE THAT SUICIDE IS NOT A CHOICE

Suicide is not about choosing to end life. Rather, it is about ending excruciating pain. In that dark place, where thought is constricted, there is no choice. Maintaining the idea that suicide is a selfish or attention-seeking decision, made without regard for others, maintains stigma. When you encounter people who do not understand suicide, remind them of this: those who die by suicide feel there are no other options to end their unbearable suffering; often, they feel like a burden to their friends and loves ones. We need to focus on developing tools, on education and advocacy, to reach those who struggle before their pain escalates.

## OUR GOALS AT SHARING KINDNESS, INC.

- Growing awareness around suicide with a focus on Cape & Islands youth. This work includes outreach to schools and other community centers to offer education and programming, speakers, trainings and documentaries.
- Building the Healing House, a center for grief, hope and healing. Through advocacy, empathy and education we will lead the way in creating lasting change in how our community views grief and loss, brain health and suicide.

**Support for those who have lost a loved one to suicide and for all of those who grieve.**

Visit us at [SharingKindness.org](https://SharingKindness.org) for more information.

### Paths to Prevention

- **Restriction of access to common methods of suicide have been proven to be effective in reducing suicide.**
- **Adequate prevention and treatment of depression and substance use disorder can reduce suicide rates.**
- **School-based interventions that enhance self-esteem and develop coping skills and healthy decision making reduce the risk of suicide among youth.**