

Suicide is an issue affecting people of all ages and backgrounds, and sadly, it is a growing challenge for families, schools, business, faith-based organizations, and all of us who care about building strong, connected communities. Here are a few statistics to consider:

- 129 individuals experience death by suicide each day
- Suicide rates are up 30% since 1999
- Suicide is the second leading cause of death for those ages 10-34

A few weeks ago, the Maricopa County Board of Supervisors joined a nationwide effort to bring real human connection and vital resources to those with thoughts of suicide, proclaiming September Suicide Awareness Month. We are encouraging people to know the warning signs and to remember that there are resources out there to help you, a friend, a family member, or anyone who might be at risk.

Warning signs

Death by suicide is difficult for those left behind. Making it even more devastating for loved ones is the feeling of being blindsided, of not seeing it coming. While it can feel like a shock, there are often warning signs. Here are a few of them:

- Talking about feeling trapped or in unbearable pain
- Talking about being a burden to others
- Increasing the use of alcohol or drugs
- Acting anxious or agitated; behaving recklessly
- Sleeping too little or too much
- Withdrawing or isolating themselves
- Showing rage or talking about seeking revenge
- Extreme mood swings

In addition, certain people are at greater risk to develop suicidal thoughts. Among the risk factors: mental disorders; history of trauma or abuse; loss of relationship or job; and severe health issues.

Resources

There are many resources available to those who need an outlet or a connection. I'd like to highlight two in particular:

The National Suicide Prevention Hotline (1-800-273-8255) provides free, confidential support to those in crisis. On their website you can find resources specific to your situation, read stories of hope and recovery, and get involved in the effort to prevent suicide. I'd encourage you to visit their website at <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>. This page also has resources for [those of you who might have lost a loved one](#) to suicide. You're not alone. There's support for you, too.

20 veterans in our country die each day by suicide. These are strong men and women but they sometimes need help. Be Connected AZ is the result of a statewide coalition, of which Maricopa County government is involved, dedicated to holistic support of our veterans. There's a 24/7 hotline they can call; an online tool that can match them with resources specific to their needs; and connections to training and job skills that can help with that next step in life. Veterans or their families are invited to call 1-866-4AZ-VETS or visit <https://beconnectedaz.org/>.

As one of the state's largest employers, Maricopa County is encouraging people to watch out for one another and to make the daily human connections that may just save someone's life. Suicide is a public health challenge and we must be willing to acknowledge it and confront it with compassion and determination. For our families. For our communities. For each other.

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