

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention

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Resources for schools



# American Foundation *for* Suicide Prevention

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## AFSP Training Program Helps Educators to Better Understand Suicidal Behavior in Adolescents

### 'More Than Sad' Features Two Films and Instructional Materials Program Listed in SPRC's Best Practices Registry for Suicide Prevention

AFSP has developed an educational program to help teachers and other school personnel learn more about teen suicide and how they can play a role in its prevention. *More Than Sad: Suicide Prevention Education for Teachers and Other School Personnel* features two films, each approximately 25 minutes in length, and a manual that integrates both films into a comprehensive suicide prevention program. The program is designed to comply with states that have requirements or recommendations for teacher education in suicide prevention, and can be used for group trainings or individual study.

The first film, *More Than Sad: Preventing Teen Suicide*, educates teachers, counselors and other school personnel about the causes of youth suicide, warning signs and steps they can take to get help for students. The second film, *More Than Sad: Teen Depression*, features four vignettes, each designed to present to teens a recognizable picture of depression, reduce fears and misconceptions about treatment, and promote help-seeking behavior.

Both films were produced by AFSP in conjunction with the award-winning Break Thru Films. Over 7,500 films have been distributed to date.

In 2010, AFSP and the Alabama Department of Education joined together to distribute the *More Than Sad* program to all 513 public high schools in the state, and the program is currently being used in 86 school districts throughout South Carolina. The *More Than Sad* program is currently listed in the Suicide Prevention Resource Center's Best Practices Registry for suicide prevention, and AFSP is using grants from Forest Laboratories and the Pepsi Refresh Project to offer webinars to instruct over 5,000 teachers on how they can use the *Teen Depression* film to encourage their students to get help for this common and treatable disorder. Said one recent webinar participant, "I feel much better prepared to recognize and intervene appropriately if I see suicide tendencies or behaviors in my students."

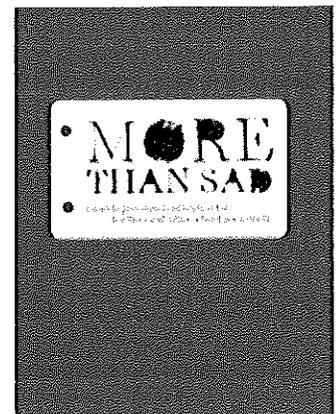
The complete package, *More Than Sad: Suicide Prevention Education for Teachers and Other School Personnel*, includes the two DVDs, a 42-page program manual, and a PowerPoint presentation for use by trainers and facilitators of teacher in-service programs.

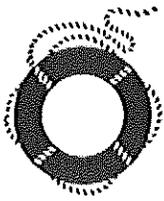
The package may be ordered from the [AFSP Store](#).

*More Than Sad: Teen Depression* may also be purchased separately from the [AFSP Store](#). This DVD is packaged with a facilitator's guide and other instructional materials that support its effective use with teens.

Clips from both DVDs and more information about AFSP's educational initiatives for school personnel and teens can be found at [MoreThanSad.org](#).

*Funding for production of More Than Sad was made possible by grants from New York State Office of Mental Health and the Leon Lowenstein Foundation, as well as donations from the Rodd D. Brickell Foundation, the Scott R. Jackowitz Memorial Fund, the Keith Milano Memorial Fund and the Foundation for Fairer Capitalism. Additional funding was obtained from the Out of the*





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## Resources for Schools

### After a Suicide: A Toolkit for Schools

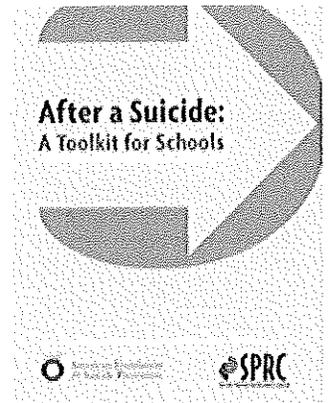
Suicide in a school community is tremendously sad and often unexpected. Faced with students struggling to cope and a community struggling to respond, schools need reliable information, practical tools and pragmatic guidance.

*After a Suicide: A Toolkit for Schools* was developed by AFSP and the Suicide Prevention Resource Center -- two of the nation's leading organizations devoted to suicide prevention -- to assist schools in the aftermath of a suicide (or other death) in a school community.

Developed in consultation with national experts, this toolkit, listed in the Best Practices Registry for Suicide Prevention, is a highly-practical resource for schools facing real-time crises, and is applicable for diverse populations and communities.

It includes general guidelines for action, do's and don'ts, templates and sample materials, and covers topics such as Crisis Response Helping Students Cope, Working with the Community, Memorialization, Social Media, Suicide Contagion and Bringing in Outside Help.

[Click here](#) to download *After a Suicide: A Toolkit for Schools*.



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### AFSP Training Program Helps Educators to Better Understand Suicidal Behavior in Adolescents

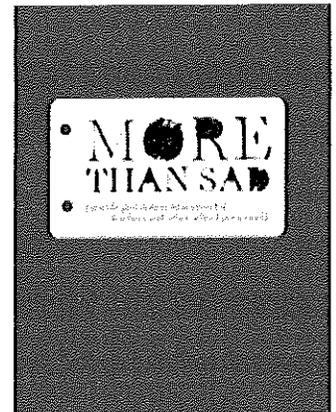
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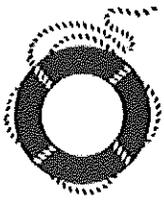
*More Than Sad: Suicide Prevention Education for Teachers and Other School Personnel* features two films, each approximately 25 minutes in length, and a manual that integrates both films into a comprehensive suicide prevention program.

The program is designed to comply with states that have requirements or recommendations for teacher education in suicide prevention, and can be used for group trainings or individual study.

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[Read More](#)





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## AFSP Store

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### More Than Sad: Suicide Prevention Education for Teachers and Other School Personnel (DVD)

This program provides education about factors that put youth at risk for suicide, in particular depression and other mental disorders.

The 2 DVD set includes:

- *More Than Sad: Preventing Teen Suicide*, 24 minutes
- Printed Supplementary Manual for Teachers and Other School Personnel
- Test Your Knowledge
- PowerPoint Presentation for Teacher Trainers
- Feedback Form
  
- *More Than Sad: Teen Depression*, 26 minutes
- Printed Facilitator's Guide
- Facts about Depression in Teens
- Depression Resource List for Teens
- Facilitator's Feedback Form
- Viewer's Feedback Form

### More Than Sad: Suicide Prevention Education for Teachers and Other School Personnel (DVD)

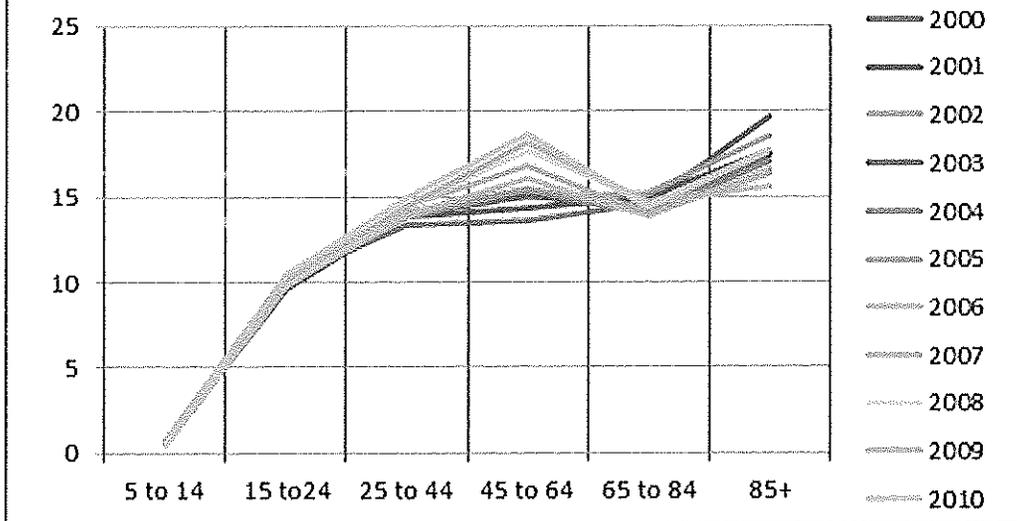
**\$99.99**

Quantity:

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## Annual Suicide Rates by Age Group

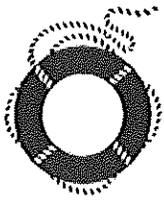


Age Group	Number of Suicides	Population	Rate
5-14	274	41,025,851	0.7
15-24	4,600	43,626,342	10.5
25-34	5,735	41,063,948	14.0
35-44	6,571	41,070,606	16.0
45-54	8,799	45,006,716	19.6
55-64	6,384	36,482,729	17.5
65-74	2,974	21,713,429	13.7
75-84	2,052	13,061,122	15.7
85+	968	5,493,433	17.6

*combined 4,874  
highschool/college*

Most Recent Suicide Figures from the Centers for Disease Control for the year 2010.

All rates are per 100,000 population.



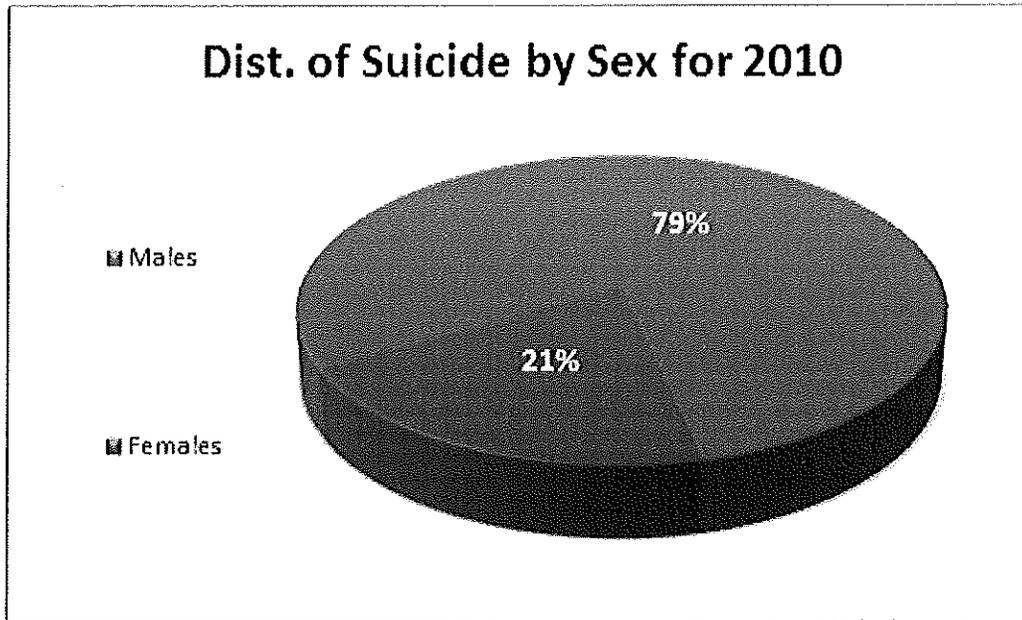
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## Facts and Figures

### By Sex



Sex	Number of Suicides	Population	Rate
Males	30,277	151,781,326	19.8
Females	8,087	156,964,212	5.0

Suicide Figures from the Centers for Disease Control for the year 2010.

All rates are per 100,000 population.



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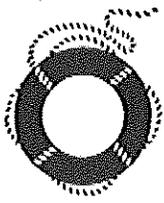
## Warning Signs of Suicide

**Suicide can be prevented. While some suicides occur without any outward warning, most people who are suicidal do give warnings. Prevent the suicide of loved ones by learning to recognize the signs of someone at risk, taking those signs seriously and knowing how to respond to them.**

**Warning signs of suicide include:**

- **Observable signs of serious depression:**
  - Unrelenting low mood
  - Pessimism
  - Hopelessness
  - Desperation
  - Anxiety, psychic pain and inner tension
  - Withdrawal
  - Sleep problems
- **Increased alcohol and/or other drug use**
- **Recent impulsiveness and taking unnecessary risks**
- **Threatening suicide or expressing a strong wish to die**
- **Making a plan:**
  - Giving away prized possessions
  - Sudden or impulsive purchase of a firearm
  - Obtaining other means of killing oneself such as poisons or medications
- **Unexpected rage or anger**

The emotional crises that usually precede suicide are often recognizable and treatable. Although most depressed people are not suicidal, most suicidal people are depressed. Serious depression can be manifested in obvious sadness, but often it is rather expressed as a loss of pleasure or withdrawal from activities that had been enjoyable. One can help prevent suicide through early recognition and treatment of depression and other psychiatric illnesses.



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## Facts and Figures

### Special Populations

Depression

Bipolar Disorder

Schizophrenia

### Depression and Suicide Prevention

An estimated 19 million Americans suffer from depression.

Clinical depression is not a temporary case of the "blues." People with depression may experience recurrent episodes of depression that can last anywhere from a few hours to a few months.

Depression is present if at least five or more of the following symptoms are present during a two-week period; at least one of the symptoms must be either depressed mood or loss of interest or pleasure in usual activities.

- Depressed mood
- Loss of interest or pleasure in usual activities
- Change in appetite or weight
- Change in sleeping patterns
- Speaking and/or moving with unusual speed or slowness
- Loss of interest or pleasure in usual activities
- Decrease in sexual drive
- Fatigue or loss of energy
- Feelings of worthlessness, self-reproach or guilt
- Diminished ability to think or concentrate, slowed thinking or indecisiveness
- Thoughts of death, suicide, or wishes to be dead

Additional factors that point to an increased risk for suicide in depressed individuals are:

- Anxiety, agitation, or enraged behavior
- Isolation
- Drug and/or alcohol use or abuse
- History of physical or emotional illness
- Feelings of hopelessness or desperation

### Facts About Depression

- Women suffer from depression twice as much as men. This two-to-one ratio exists regardless of racial and ethnic background or economic status.
- Depression in people 65 and older increases the risk of stroke and other medical complications.
- The economic cost of depressive illnesses is \$30 billion to \$44 billion a year.
- More Americans (24 million) suffer from depression than coronary heart disease (17 million), cancer (12 million), and HIV/AIDS (1 million).

- Even though effective treatments are available, only one in three depressed people gets help.

## Depression and Suicide

- Although most depressed people are not suicidal, two-thirds of those who die by suicide suffer from a depressive illness.
- About 15 percent of the population will suffer from depression at some time during their life. Thirty percent of all depressed inpatients attempt suicide.

## Medical Illness and Depression

- Researchers believe that after an initial attack of severe depression 70 percent of people are vulnerable to another episode.
- The following illnesses are commonly associated with later-life depression: cancer, Parkinson's disease, heart disease, stroke and Alzheimer's disease.
- Research shows that depression and heart disease often accompany each other and that each can lead to the other. While roughly one in six people have an episode of major depression, the number goes to one in two for people with heart disease.
- About 25 percent of cancer patients suffer from clinical depression.
- Depression in people 65 and older increases the risk of stroke and other medical complications.
- Nearly eight out of ten patients with depressive illness will improve through treatment with medicine and psychotherapy.

Prevent suicide through early recognition and treatment of depression and other psychiatric illnesses.

## Bipolar Disorder and Suicide Prevention

Almost 2 million Americans currently suffer from bipolar disorder. An estimated 3 percent to 20 percent of persons diagnosed with bipolar disorder die by suicide.

Approximately 20 percent of all patients with bipolar disorder have their first episode during adolescence but diagnosis is often delayed for years. Delayed recognition that low moods (depression) and highs (mania) are symptoms of a treatable mental disorder can foster related problems, such as substance abuse and suicidal behaviors.

Early recognition and treatment of bipolar disorder may prevent years of needless suffering and death by suicide. Eighty percent to 90 percent of people who have bipolar disorder can be treated effectively with medication and psychotherapy.

The mood stabilizers lithium carbonate, carbamazepine and valproate, are the most commonly prescribed medications to treat bipolar disorder. Lithium carbonate has shown more effectiveness in preventing suicidal behaviors associated with bipolar disorder.

- The death rate for untreated bipolar patients is higher than that of most types of heart disease and many types of cancer.
- Studies of bipolar patients indicate that 25 percent to 50 percent of persons with this illness make at least one suicide attempt.
- Studies indicate that most bipolar patients who die by suicide communicate their suicidal state to others, most often through direct and specific statements of suicidal intent.
- People suffering from bipolar disorder may die by suicide earlier in the course of this chronic illness than patients with other mental disorders. Recent hospital discharge is a very high-risk time.
- Hopelessness, a family history of suicide and previous attempts indicate bipolar patients at highest risk of suicide.
- Maintaining treatment for bipolar illness is critical. The suicide rate in the first year off lithium treatment is 20 times that during treatment.
- [This site](#) gives consumers and families information for locating mental health services anywhere in the country.

Early and accurate diagnosis of bipolar disorder and aggressive professional treatment are essential in preventing suicide.

## Schizophrenia and Suicide Prevention

About 3 million people in this country suffer from schizophrenia, costing the nation an estimated \$48 billion annually.

Schizophrenia is a brain disorder that makes it difficult for an individual to distinguish between the real and the unreal. Suffering a chemical imbalance in the brain, those with schizophrenia often have difficulty expressing their ideas coherently, or cannot engage with others at all.

- There is no known cure for schizophrenia, but it is highly treatable.
- Approximately 1 percent of the world population suffers from schizophrenia.
- Schizophrenia can affect anyone at any age, but most cases develop between adolescence and age 30.
- Depression is probably the most important risk factor for suicide in schizophrenia. Researchers have found that only four percent of those with schizophrenia who exhibit suicidal behavior do so in response to voices telling them to kill themselves.
- The risk for suicide is high among individuals with schizophrenia. It is estimated that twenty to forty percent make suicide attempts and over ten percent of individuals with schizophrenia eventually complete suicide.
- Suicide is the number one cause of death for young people with schizophrenia.
- Unlike other high-risk groups, the risk for suicidal behavior is high throughout the life span for individuals with schizophrenia, though the highest risk is earlier in the illness and within six months after acute exacerbations and hospitalization.
- While there is no cure for schizophrenia, it is a highly treatable disorder. In fact, the treatment success rate for schizophrenia is 60 percent, compared with 41 percent to 52 percent for heart patients.
- Clozapine has been shown to be effective in reducing suicide and attempted suicide in schizophrenic patients.
- Prevent suicide through early recognition and treatment of schizophrenia and other psychiatric illnesses.



Prevent suicide through early recognition and treatment of depression and other psychiatric illnesses.



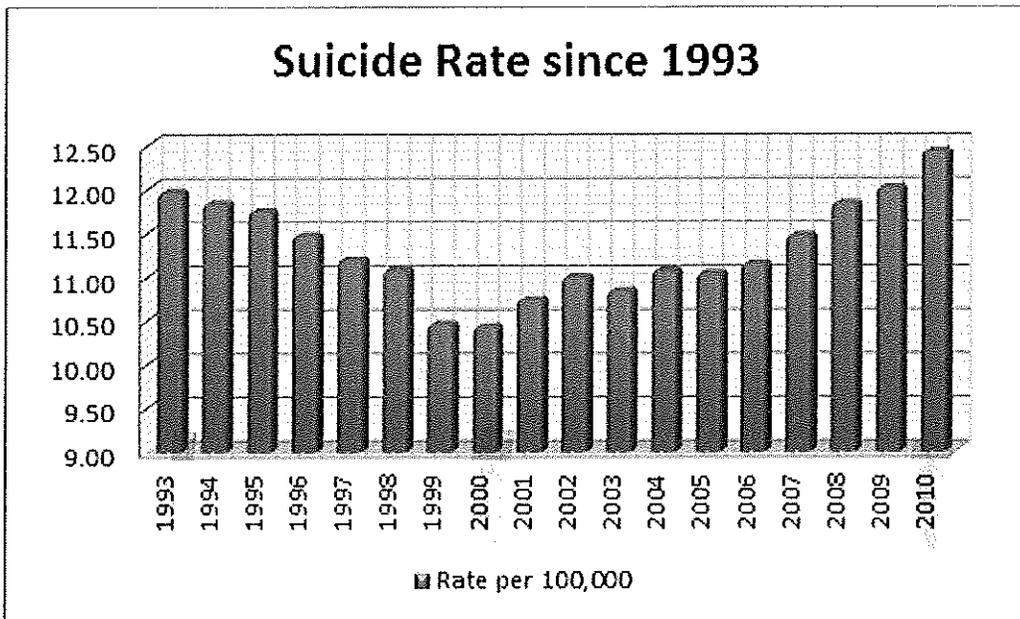
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## Facts and Figures

The latest data available from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention indicates that 38,364 suicide deaths were reported in the U.S. in 2010. This latest rise places suicide again as the 10th leading cause of death in the U.S. Nationally, the suicide rate increased 3.9 percent over 2009 to equal approximately 12.4 suicides per 100,000 people. The rate of suicide has been increasing since 2000. This is the highest rate of suicide in 15 years.



- Every 13.7 minutes someone in the United States dies by suicide.
- Nearly 1,000,000 people make a suicide attempt every year.
- 90% of people who die by suicide have a diagnosable and treatable psychiatric disorder at the time of their death.
- Most people with mental illness do not die by suicide.
- Recent data puts yearly medical costs for suicide at nearly \$100 million (2005).
- Men are nearly 4 times more likely to die by suicide than women. Women attempt suicide 3 times as often as men. [Click here to view.](#)
- Suicide rates are highest for people between the ages of 40 and 59. [Click here to view.](#)
- Native American peoples are most likely to die by suicide, followed by white individuals. [Click here to view.](#)

Year	Number of Suicide Deaths	Population	Rate per 100,000
1993	31,102	259,918,595	12.0

1994	31,142	263,125,826	11.8
1995	31,284	266,278,403	11.8
1996	30,903	269,394,291	11.5
1997	30,535	272,646,932	11.2
1998	30,575	275,854,116	11.1
1999	29,199	279,040,181	10.5
2000	29,350	281,421,906	10.4
2001	30,622	285,081,556	10.7
2002	31,655	287,803,914	11.0
2003	31,484	290,326,418	10.8
2004	32,439	293,045,739	11.1
2005	32,637	295,753,151	11.0
2006	33,300	298,593,212	11.2
2007	34,598	301,579,895	11.5
2008	36,035	304,374,846	11.8
2009	36,909	307,006,550	12.0
2010	38,364	308,745,538	12.4

Most recent figures from the Centers for Disease Control for the year 2010.

All rates are per 100,000 population.