1  **Teen Suicide**  
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2  **Suicide**  
The spectrum of suicide

3  **Suicide Defined**  
Suicide: Intentionally causing one’s own death.

4  
- Sometimes difficult to determine intention  
- High speed, 1 car accidents  
- Auto-erotic hangings  
- Reluctance to label as suicide because of stigma

5  **What is most popular place to commit suicide in the United States?**

6  **Suicide Rates by States and Washington, DC (2004)**

7  **Suicide Statistics**  
Emergency room visits for self-inflicted injury: 400,000

    Average number of deaths each year 30,622

    On average, a young person (age 15-24) dies by suicide every 2 hours and 12 minutes.

8  79.4%

9  **Gender Disparities**  
Firearms are the most commonly used method of suicide among males (57.6%)

    Poisoning is the most common method of suicide for females (39.1%)
10 Racial and Ethnic Disparities
Among American Indians/Alaska Natives ages 15- to 34-years, suicide is the second leading cause of death.

11 Attempts
Percentage of suicide attempts
Female high school students in grades 9-12
14.0% Hispanic
7.7% White, non-Hispanic
9.9 Black, non-Hispanic

12 Nonfatal Suicidal Thoughts and Behavior
15 - 24 y/o
1:100-200
suicide to attempts

13 2007 YRBSS
Grade 6-12
Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System

14 2007 YRBSS
Grade 6-12
• Suicide
• Drinking
• Fighting
• Obesity
• Physical activity
• Smoking
• Drug use
• Drinking and driving
Resiliency Factors
• Parents in the home
• Caring relationships with adults and peers
Suicide: Intentionally causing one’s own death.

The spectrum of suicide ideation ranges from thoughts of suicide to actual suicide attempts.


Theories explaining teen suicide

Psychological factors
Biochemical
Genetic link
Complicating Factors

Explanations for Suicide

Psychological factors
Loss of a loved one
Overwhelming rage or guilt
Copycat suicide / Suicide clusters

Biochemical
Low level serotonin associated with suicide completion
Serotonin is a neurotransmitter, which helps regulate sleep, memory, aggressive behavior, and other functions.

Genetic link
Hemingway family
Earnest Hemingway
Father
Both siblings
Granddaughter

Genetic link
12% of attempters' children attempted suicide
2% of non-attempters' children attempted suicide.

23 **Genetic link**
Adoption studies: a greater risk of suicide among biologic rather than adoptive relatives.

Suicide appears to be an independent, inheritable risk factor.

24 **Complicating Factors**
Family history of abuse, violence place individuals at increased risk for suicidal behaviors

Histories of childhood physical abuse and sexual abuse, as well as parental neglect and separations, may be correlated with a variety of self-destructive behaviors.

25 **Complicating Factors**
Drug and alcohol abuse
30 and 50 % of persons who die by suicide have a dependence on alcohol or drugs

26 **Teen Suicide and Psychiatric Illness**
- Depressive disorders
- Schizophrenia
- Alcohol or substance abuse
- Anxiety Disorders
- Personality disorders

27 **Drug and Alcohol Abuse**
- In completed suicides, men have higher rates of alcohol abuse, women have higher rates of drug abuse
- Increased number of substances used, rather than the type of substance appears to be important
- Most have co-morbid psychiatric disorders,
• females have Borderline Personality Disorder

Highest Risk:
• Recent or impending interpersonal loss
• Co-morbid depression

28 Teen Suicide Methods
Firearms
Hanging
Strangulation
Suffocation
Poisons

29 Hard methods
Gun
Hanging

30 Soft methods
Slashing wrists
Overdose on pills

31 Warning Signs
Change in eating and sleeping habits
Withdrawal from friends, family, and activities
Unusual violent actions or rebellious behavior
Unusual neglect of personal appearance
Marked personality change
Loss of interest in pleasurable activities

32 SADPERSONS Scale
Sex
Age
Depression
Previous Attempts
Interviewing a Suicidal Teen

Lethality of the plan
Means to carry out plan

Suicide Evaluation
Assessment
Anxiety
Irritation
Avoidance
Denial

Direct Questioning About Suicide
Ask About:
Suicidal ideation
Suicide plans

Give Added Consideration to:
Suicide attempts (actual and aborted)
First episode of suicidality (Kessler 1999)
Hopelessness
Ambivalence: a chance to intervene
Psychological pain history

Components of Suicidal Ideation
Intent:
Subjective expectation and desire for a self-destructive act to end
in death.
Lethality:
  Objective danger to life associated with a suicide method or action.

38 Assess
Degree of ambivalence - wish to live, wish to die
Intensity, frequency of attempt
Rehearsal/availability of method
Presence/absence of suicide note
Deterrents
  (e.g. family, religion, positive therapeutic relationship, positive support system - including work)

39 Characteristics of a Suicide Plan
  Method
  Time
  Place
  Available means
  Arranging sequence of events

40 Interviewing a Suicidal Teen
Questions for the parent include asking about issues related to:
  Home
  Drugs
  Sexual activity
  School and peers – changes in these
  Changes in grades
  Friendships
  Breakups,
  Preoccupation with death

41 Questions to Ask
  “how things are going?”
Questions to Ask
How are things at school?
Do you enjoy your studies or are they stressful?
What are your future plans?
Do you have friends that you can talk to when things are tough?
Have you recently lost a good friendship or close relationship?

Questions to Ask
Do you feel like others do not like you?
Do you spend a lot of time alone
Is there an adult (other than parents) to whom you can confide your fears/worries/concerns
Have you used any medications/drugs that were not for a specific illness or condition

Questions to Ask
Are you sexually active – if so, what protection are you using for pregnancy and STD – does your parent know you are having sex (a surprising number do know and have taken kids for birth control counseling, etc)
If a girl, ask if she could be pregnant
Have you ever considered suicide? If so, what method would you use and do you have access to it?

Keeping them safe
Psychiatric evaluation
Treatment options
  Treat at home with follow up care
  Hospitalization

Suicide effect on the family

Every 19 minutes someone commits suicide