

September is National Suicide Prevention Awareness Month. The Dedham Human Rights Commission would like to raise awareness and help connect individuals with suicidal ideation to treatment services.

Every year thousands of individuals die by suicide, leaving behind their friends and family with this tragic loss. In many cases, friends and families affected by a suicide loss (often called “suicide loss survivors”) are left in the dark. Too often the feelings of shame and stigma prevent them from talking openly.

Suicidal thoughts, much like mental health conditions, can affect anyone regardless of age, gender, race, religion, occupation, or socio-economic background. Suicide may be the result of an untreated mental health condition. Suicidal thoughts, although common, should not be considered normal and often indicate more serious issues.

Sobering statistics

- 3/4 of all people who die by suicide are male.
- Women attempt suicide more often than but men are nearly 4x more likely to die by suicide.
- Suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death for people ages 10-34 and the 4th leading cause of death for people 35-54
- The overall suicide rate in the U.S. has increased by 31% since 2001
- Almost half the people who die by suicide had a diagnosed mental health condition
- While half of individuals who die by suicide have a diagnosed mental health condition, research shows that 90% experienced symptoms.

Know the warning signs!

- Talks, writes, texts about wanting to die or kill themselves
- Looking for or researching ways to kill themselves.
- Feeling of hopelessness or having no purpose.
- Speaks of feeling trapped or about being in pain.
- Doesn't want to be a burden to others.
- Increased use of alcohol and or drugs.
- Feeling anxious or agitated.
- Sleeping too little or too much.
- Social withdrawal or avoidance of family or friends.
- Rage or talking about seeking revenge.
- Extreme mood swings.
- Impulsive or reckless behavior.
- Making a will or giving away personal possessions.
- Talks about suicide as a way out.

If you suspect that a family member or friend may be considering suicide, talk to them about your concerns. Begin by asking questions in a non-judgmental and non-confrontational way.

Don't be afraid to ask direct questions like, "Are you thinking about suicide?"

Make sure you:

- stay calm and speak in a reassuring tone
- acknowledge that their feelings are legitimate
- offer support and encouragement
- tell them that help is available and that they can feel better with treatment

Don't minimize their problems or feelings. Listening and showing your support is the best way to help them. Encourage them to seek help from a professional.

Help them find a healthcare provider, offer to make the phone call, offer to take them to the doctor's or a hospital.

It can be unsettling when a person in your life shows signs of being suicidal. But it's important to take action.

If you're concerned and don't know what to do, you can get help from a crisis or suicide prevention hotline.

[National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#) at 800-273-TALK (800-273-8255). They have trained counselors available 24/7.

[Samaritans](#) (877)-870-HOPE (46730 call or text 24/7

[William James College , Interface Referral Service](#) 1-888-244-6843 Monday - Friday
9am to 5 pm to learn about mental health resources and service in or near your
community.