



Make All Of Your Life Worth Living

Everything Passes

As hard as things may be, as rational as suicide may seem, it is not the answer. No matter what you think, those whom suicide leaves behind never feel relieved by the loss of their loved one. An unfortunately high number of senior citizens around the world take their own lives. You may be tired of contending with aging, disease, pain or the sense that you are a burden. You may feel that your problems are inescapable, but there is hope.

Constant feelings of despair, anxiety, worthlessness, emptiness, irritation and being unloved are not just normal effects of aging. They are symptoms of depression: a treatable medical condition. You can enjoy the rest of your life. Your remaining years can be full of meaning and love. Choose life.

The Depression Connection

About 30% of suicide attempts are made by people suffering from mood disorders like depression. Depression is a treatable medical disorder that profoundly affects the wounded.

Depression is an insidious disease that tells its victims that there is no cure. Depression is caused by chemical imbalance in the brain. Like other chemical imbalances, it can be treated — but the wounded must open themselves to treatment.

If you suspect that you may be suffering from depression, speak to a medical or mental health professional. You can begin feeling better today.

Older adults are just 12% of the population, but approximately 18% of suicides.

Older adults are less likely to be discovered and men ages 85 and older have the highest rate of any group.

The loss, or predicted loss, of a life partner is a common trigger. Relationships are very important. Make more connections, create new peers and support them.

Many senior suicides do not discuss their plans. Talk with your doctor, your family and your friends. Tell them about your feelings. Do not remain isolated: open the door to understanding.

RESOURCES

National Suicide Prevention Hotline:

988

Expert depression overview focusing on the elderly:

www.webmd.com/depression/guide/depression-elderly

Information about the high depression and medication rate in nursing homes:

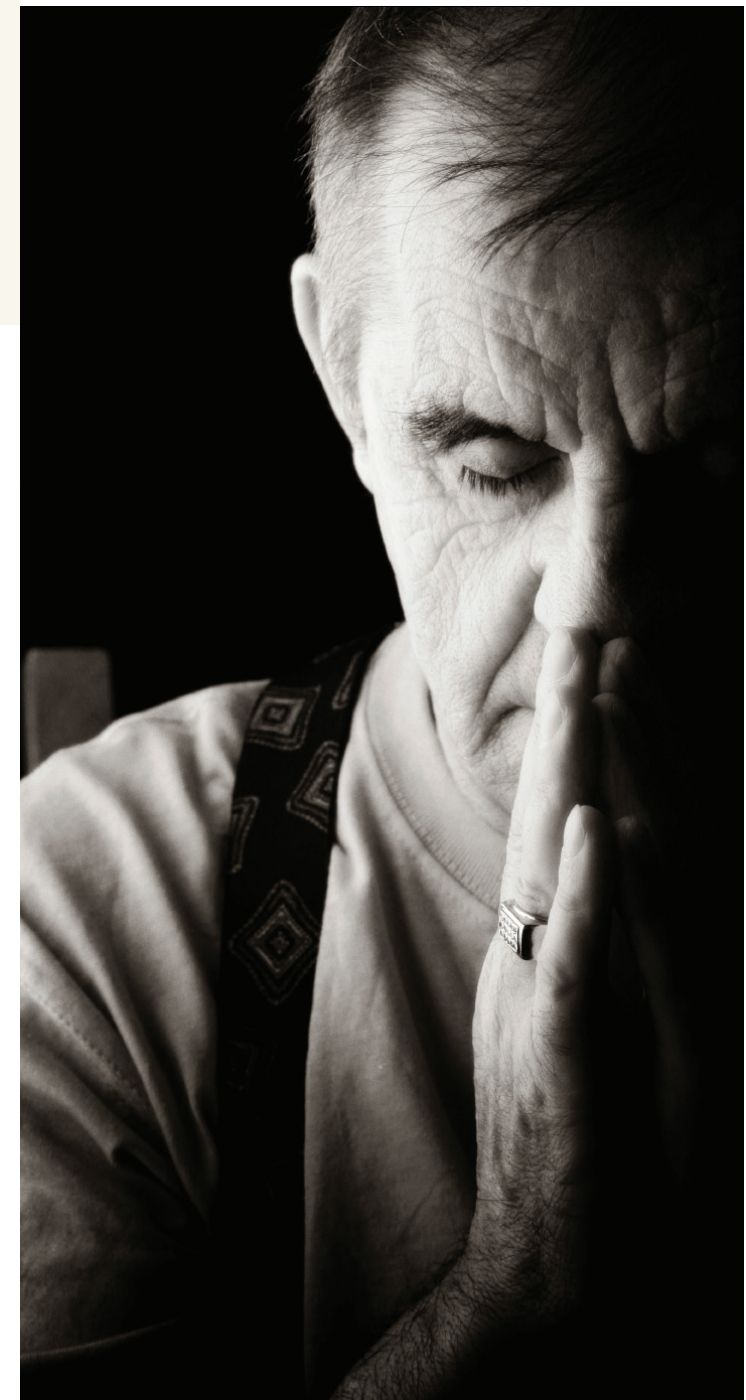
depression.about.com/b/2008/05/13/nursing-homes-can-be-depressing.htm

Elderly-specific suicide prevention information:

www.suicide.org/elderly-suicide.html

>INFOCUS

senior SUICIDE



GET YOUR LIFE >INFOCUS

©2023 Prevention & Treatment Resource Press, LLC
www.PTRPress.com • 877-329-0570 • product #PB-PS102

This pamphlet may not be copied.



Warning Signs of Suicide

Surprise is a common reaction to a senior citizen's suicide. Friends, family, loved ones and neighbors often never suspect anything was amiss. Many senior citizens consider their suicide very deliberately and take special care to keep the act private. However, there are usually signs.

FIREARMS: Obtaining a gun, taking interest in old weapons or trading in a weapon for a new one may be a sign of considering suicide. Talk with someone if they are taking a new, or renewed, interest in firearms.

MEDICATION: Elderly people typically take more potent medication than other age groups. Many of these come with warnings about dosage and interactions. Hoarding medication or requesting a larger prescription can be a warning sign.

SAYING GOODBYE: Senior citizens tend to be deliberate and careful in taking their own lives. Before committing suicide they will usually make sure their affairs are in order, and this includes goodbye gifts, notes or talks.

DRAMATIC BEHAVIOR CHANGES: Attempting to repay all or old debts, giving away possessions, purposeful isolation, acting impulsively, being in a greater than usual hurry to accomplish goals — or abandoning those goals.

EXTREME MOODS: Anger, sadness, irritation, guilt, shame, anxiety and ineffectiveness are all potential warning signs of suicidal ideation.

Talking About Suicide With A Senior Citizen

The best way to speak with anyone about suicide is to be direct, open and non-judgmental. Your goal should be to listen compassionately. You cannot stop someone who is determined to end their life, but the simple act of caring can banish the feelings of alienation and isolation that precede many suicides.

You will not give anybody the idea to kill themselves, but you can open a dialog that might save a life. Remember, it isn't your job to tell the other person what to do. Listen, understand and care. If prompted, then share.

To start a conversation about suicide, ask "Are you considering, or have you considered suicide?" Such a direct question shows honesty and respect. Things you want to know — and can ask directly — that can help you assess how likely your loved one is to commit suicide can be remembered with the acronym PLAID PALS.



This acronym was coined by San Francisco Suicide Prevention.

PLAN - *Do they have one?*

LETHALITY - *Is it a thought-out, deadly plan?*

AVAILABILITY - *Do they have the means to carry it out?*

ILLNESS - *Do they have a mental or physical illness?*

DEPRESSION - *Are they depressed? Have they been diagnosed? Are they seeking help?*

PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS - *How many? How recent?*

ALONE - *Are they alone? Do they have a support system or partner? Do they feel alone?*

LOSS - *Have they suffered a loss? Death, relationship, self-esteem, bodily function?*

SUBSTANCE ABUSE (or use) - *Drugs, alcohol, medicine? Current, chronic?*

Acknowledge their feelings, and those feelings' validity. They have a right to their pain and problems.

Tell your loved one you are there for them. You want to help in any way they will allow and at any time they wish. Ask them if they have a plan for getting through the night, the day, the next day and the following days. Tell them they are still needed and useful. Don't want to lose them in such a tragic way.

If you believe that your loved one is at immediate risk of committing suicide, stay with them. Call a mental health professional, clinic or crisis hotline. Remove the means of suicide from the home: rope, sharp items, guns, drugs, etc.

While you cannot keep someone from killing themselves, you can keep it from happening while you're around and you can help to change their mind. Be available for your loved one.

If You Are Considering Suicide

Stop.

Think about the people who you'll leave behind. Think about the people who will find you. Read the news stories about other senior citizens who have killed themselves those left behind are always shocked, dismayed and left confused and upset.

Think about your younger loved ones. Think about the example that you set. Remember: The rest of your life can be meaningful. You can make it so. Find importance in every day.