



## VIOLENCE PREVENTION COALITION OF GREATER LOS ANGELES

A Project of Community Partners®

### **FACT SHEET: suicide**

#### LOS ANGELES COUNTY AND CALIFORNIA

- ❖ Of the 691 suicide deaths in LA County in 2004, 268 (39%) involved the use of a firearm. *California Department of Health Services, 2004.*
- ❖ In 2004, California had the highest number of suicides for all age groups. *Injury Mortality Reports, CDC National Center for Injury Prevention and Control (NCIPC), Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System (WISQARS), 1999 – 2004.*
- ❖ In 2004, suicide was the eighth leading cause of death for all Californian and U.S. men. *Leading causes of death reports, CDC, NCIPC, WISQARS 1999-2004.*
- ❖ In 2004, suicide was the third leading cause of death among 15-34 year olds in California. *Leading causes of death reports, CDC, NCIPC, WISQARS 1999-2004.*

#### UNITED STATES

##### *General statistics*

- ❖ Suicide took the lives of 32,439 people in 2004, an 11% increase from 1999 (n=29,199). *Leading causes of death reports, CDC, NCIPC, WISQARS 1999-2004.*
- ❖ Suicide rates are generally higher than the national average in the western states and lower in the eastern and midwestern states. *"Regional variations in suicide rates—United States," CDC, MMWR, 1990–1994.*
- ❖ In 2001, 55% of suicides were committed with a firearm. *"Deaths: leading causes for 2001," National Vital Statistics Report, 2001.*

##### *Race/Ethnicity*

- ❖ Suicide rates are highest among Whites and second highest among American Indian and Native Alaskan men. *Injury Mortality Reports, CDC, NCIPC, WISQARS, 2004.*
- ❖ American Indian and Alaskan Natives have the highest rate of suicide in the 15 to 24 age group. *Injury Mortality Reports, CDC, NCIPC, WISQARS, 2004.*

##### *Gender*

- ❖ Women attempt suicide twice as much as men. *American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics, 2004.*
- ❖ Males (n=25566) are four times more likely to die from suicide than females (n=6873). *Leading causes of death reports, CDC, NCIPC, WISQARS 1999-2004.*
- ❖ A woman takes her own life every 90 minutes in the U.S., but it is estimated that one woman attempts suicide every 78 seconds. *American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics, 2004.*
- ❖ Of the total number of suicides among ages 15 to 24 in 2001, 86% (n=3,409) were male and 14% (n=562) were female. *"Deaths: leading causes for 2001," National Vital Statistics Report, 2003.*
- ❖ Firearms are now the leading method of suicide in women, as well as men. *American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics, 2004.*

(OVER)

- ❖ The suicide rates for women peak between the ages of 45-54 years old, and again after age 75. *American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics, 2004.*

*Age*

- ❖ Suicide is the third leading cause of death among young people ages 15 to 24. In 2001, 3,971 suicides were reported in this group. *"Deaths: leading causes for 2001," National Vital Statistics Report, 2003.*
- ❖ In 2001, firearms were used in 54% of youth suicides. *"Deaths: leading causes for 2001," National Vital Statistics Report, 2003.*
- ❖ In 2001, 5,393 Americans over age 65 committed suicide. Of those, 85% (n=4,589) were men and 15% (n=804) were women. *Suicide fact sheet, CDC, 2004.*
- ❖ Firearms were used in 73% of suicides committed by adults over the age of 65 in 2001. *Suicide fact sheet, CDC, 2004.*

<b>Myths</b>	<b>Facts</b>
Suicides rates are higher during the winter holidays.	Suicide rates in the United States are lowest in the winter and highest in the spring.
Suicidal people just want to die.	Most of the time, suicidal people are torn between wanting to die and wanting to live. Most suicidal individuals don't want death; they just want to stop the great psychological or emotional pain they are experiencing, accessed 2007.
People who commit suicide do not warn others.	Eight out of every 10 people who kill themselves give definite clues to their intentions. They leave numerous clues and warnings to others, although clues may be non-verbal or difficult to detect, accessed 2007.
People who talk about suicide are only trying to get attention. They won't really do it.	Few commit suicide without first letting someone know how they feel. Those who are considering suicide give clues and warnings as a cry for help. Over 70% who do threaten to commit suicide either make an attempt or complete the act, accessed 2007.
Don't mention suicide to someone who's showing signs of depression. It will plant the idea in their minds and they will act on it.	Many depressed people have already considered suicide as an option. Discussing it openly helps the suicidal person sort through the problems and generally provides a sense of relief and understanding. It is one of the most helpful things you can do, accessed 2007.

*Didi Hirsch Community Mental Health Center (DHCMHC) and the Suicide Prevention Center (SPC), 2007.*

***If you or someone you know has talked about suicide, please call the following numbers for assistance and information:***

***Didi Hirsch Mental Health Center: Suicide Crisis Line: 1-877-7-CRISIS***  
***Teenline (for any crisis): 1-800-852-8336***

For more information, please contact:

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