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 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.*


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**


- 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Myths</th>
<th>Facts</th>
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<tr>
<td>Suicides rates are higher during the winter holidays.</td>
<td>Suicide rates in the United States are lowest in the winter and highest in the spring.</td>
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<td>Suicidal people just want to die.</td>
<td>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.</td>
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<td>People who commit suicide do not warn others.</td>
<td>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.</td>
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<tr>
<td>People who talk about suicide are only trying to get attention. They won't really do it.</td>
<td>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.</td>
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<td>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.</td>
<td>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.</td>
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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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