

Myths About Suicide

Myths or misinformation about suicide – or the lack of information altogether – often means that desperate people can't get the help they need in times of crisis. Being informed about suicide can help you save your own life or someone else's.

MYTH

People who talk about suicide rarely actually do it. (This relates to the belief that people are just seeking attention or bluffing.)

FACT

People who die by suicide often give a clue or warning of their intentions. The majority of people who attempt suicide say or do something to express their intention before they act. Always treat even subtle threats seriously.

MYTH

The suicidal person wants to die and there is nothing anyone can do about it.

FACT

Often the suicidal person feels ambivalent about dying. People usually don't want to die – rather, they want to end their intense emotional pain. You can help by talking to the person about what they're going through.

MYTH

A person who attempts suicide will always have thoughts of suicide.

FACT

While a previous suicide attempt statistically increases the chance of another one, many people never attempt again. Often a suicide attempt occurs during a particularly stressful period or major depression. With intervention and support, a person may stop feeling suicidal.

MYTH

If you directly ask the person, "Do you feel like killing yourself?" it will lead to a suicide attempt.

FACT

Usually, speaking to a person directly about suicidal intent will relieve the anxiety surrounding the feeling, acting as a deterrent to the suicidal behaviour. You don't create self-destructive feelings in another person simply by talking about suicide. The thought was there before you asked about it.

MYTH

A good job and stable relationships prevent people from contemplating suicide.

FACT

People of all socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds can feel suicidal. Although positive social connections are a major protective factor, biological, social, psychological, and spiritual risk factors also contribute.