

Suicide Statistics

Suicide is an issue which touches lives in every part of our society. There is no single “type” of person who attempts or completes suicide. It is important to look at statistics in order to gain a greater understanding of the “big picture”. However, all statistics should be treated with caution as there are many factors that can make statistics misleading.

General Canadian Suicide Statistics:

- In 1998, approximately 3,700 Canadians took their own lives, an average of about 10 suicides completed per day.
- Canadians are about 7 times more likely to die from suicide than to be the victim of a homicide.
- The World Health Organization estimates as many as 20 suicide attempts for every suicide death.
- In 1998, suicide was the leading cause of death for men between the ages of 25-29 and 40-44; for women it was the leading cause of death for ages 30-34.
- Canada's suicide rate for the entire population ranked in the middle of 22 western industrialized countries; our suicide rate was similar to those reported in Australia, Ireland, Norway, Germany and Sweden.

The Differences between Men and Women:

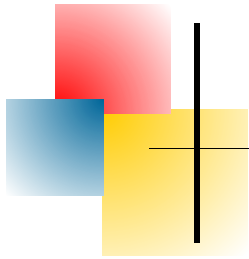
- Men are at least four times more likely than women to complete suicide.
- Men are also more likely than women to die during their first suicide attempt, because the methods men tend to use are more lethal.
- In 1998, 26% of male suicides were completed using firearms, versus only 7% of female suicides. On the other hand, 41% of females died from poisoning, versus 22% of males.
- Hospitalization rates for women who attempt suicide are much higher than for men; in 1998 there were 108 per 100,000 females over the age of 10 hospitalized for attempting suicide, and only 70 per 100,000 males.

Youth and Suicide in Canada:

- The hospitalization rate for attempted suicide among females was highest at ages 15 to 19, with 221 per 100,000, in contrast with males in the same age range at 87 per 100,000 attempting suicide.

The Suicide Resource Group, Wellington-Dufferin is dedicated to the reduction of suicide and suicidal behaviour and its impact on individuals, families, and communities.

If you find this fact sheet useful, please feel free to make copies and pass it along to others.
For more information about the Suicide Resource Group, please call 519-766-4450 x231



Suicide Statistics Continued. . .

Youth and Suicide in Canada Continued. . .

- Among young teens, girls are more likely than boys to have suicidal thoughts; an estimated 44,000 12 and 13-year olds (7%) reported that they had thought about suicide in the previous year: 8.4% of girls and 4.6% of boys.
- Suicide has occurred in Canadian youth as young as 10 years old according to Statistics Canada's 1998 report.
- Several studies have pointed to widespread use of alcohol and drugs among teens as significant contributing factors in youth suicide.

Public Health Impact of Suicide:

- Patients admitted for attempting suicide in 1998 stayed in hospital an average of 7.1 days, a total of 162,498 hospital days that year.
- Almost half of the people admitted to hospital for attempting suicide had a primary diagnosis of a mental health issue, including bipolar disorder, alcohol or drug dependence, depression and schizophrenia.
- While the financial cost of suicide can be high, the loss in terms of potential years of life lost is staggering, especially for men; in 1997, suicide ranked third after cancer and heart diseases in potential years of life lost for men.
- There are no national figures on the economic cost of suicide, but a 1996 New Brunswick study estimated the average cost per suicide death (direct and indirect) at \$850,000.
- In 1998, approximately 1 in 10 persons hospitalized for attempting suicide had been discharged for at least one previous attempt in the same year.
- Researchers widely agree that suicide is associated with a number of complicated factors related to one's physical and mental health, for example: a mental health diagnosis, social isolation, a previous suicide attempt, family violence, physical illness, and substance abuse.