

WARNING SIGNS OF SUICIDE

Here's an Easy-to-Remember Mnemonic for the Warning Signs of Suicide:

IS PATH WARM?

A person at risk for suicidal behavior most often will exhibit warning signs:

I Ideation - Expressed or communicated ideation

- Threatening to hurt or kill him/herself, or talking of wanting to hurt or kill him/herself; and/or

- Looking for ways to kill him/herself by seeking access to firearms, available pills, or other means; and/or

- Talking or writing about death, dying or suicide, when these actions are out of the ordinary.

S Substance Abuse - Increased substance (alcohol or drug) use

P Purposelessness - No reason for living; no sense of purpose in life

A Anxiety - Anxiety, agitation, unable to sleep or sleeping all the time

T Trapped - Feeling trapped (like there's no way out)

H Hopelessness - Hopelessness

W Withdrawal - Withdrawal from friends, family and society

A Anger - Rage, uncontrolled anger, seeking revenge

R Recklessness - Acting reckless or engaging in risk activities, seemingly without thinking

M Mood Change - Dramatic mood changes

These warning signs were derived as a consensus from a meeting of internationally-renowned clinical researchers held under the auspices of AAS in Wellesley, MA in November 2003.

OTHER ISSUES

- The designation of "survivor of suicide" refers to the family members and friends who are impacted by the death of their loved one by suicide.

- Although the number of survivors is difficult to calculate, conservative estimates indicate that there are six survivors for every completed suicide. Based on data from 1980 to 2005, we can estimate that the number of survivors in the U.S. is approximately 4.5 million. An estimated 195,822 survivors of suicide were added in 2005.

Sources

The information for this fact sheet was gathered from the National Vital Statistics Reports on the National Center for Health Statistics website (<http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/Default.htm>) operated by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention. Unless specified otherwise, information presented refers to the latest available data (2005).

American Association of Suicidology

The goal of the American Association of Suicidology (AAS) is to understand and prevent suicide. AAS promotes research, public awareness programs, education, and training for professionals, survivors, and all interested persons. AAS serves as a national clearinghouse for information on suicide. AAS has many resources and publications which are available to its membership and the general public. For membership information,

please contact:

American Association of Suicidology

5221 Wisconsin Avenue, N. W.

Washington, D.C. 20015

Email: info@suicidology.org

Website: www.suicidology.org

(202) 237-2280 Fax: (202) 237-2282

<http://suicidology.org/associations/1045/files/Kit2008.pdf>