

# SUICIDE FACTS & INFORMATION

- ✚ The highest suicide rates of any age group in the US occur among persons aged 65 years and older.
- ✚ One of the leading causes of suicide among the elderly is depression that has been undiagnosed or treated.
- ✚ In any given year, over 600 Coloradans will die from suicide.
- ✚ Every year out of 9600 Coloradans who seriously contemplate suicide—almost one-half to two-thirds of these individuals are not being treated for their suicidal symptoms.
- ✚ Colorado has the 7<sup>th</sup> highest suicide rate in the US (reasons are unclear but suicide is highest in western states with Nevada being the highest).



## RISK FACTORS THAT MAY INCREASE SUICIDE POTENTIAL:

- Family history of suicide
- Recent of previous suicide attempt
- Relational, social, work, or financial loss
- Unwillingness to seek help because of stigma associated with seeking help from outsiders/mental health professionals
- Physical illness; terminal disease
- Isolation, a feeling of being cut off from other people
- Co-occurring mental issues (e.g. depression or bi-polar) or substance abuse

## WARNING SIGNS OF SOMEONE WHO MIGHT BE SUICIDAL:

- Talking about suicide, e.g. “I have no reason left to live,” “I won’t be a burden much longer,” etc.
- Hopelessness, worthlessness, or no sense of purpose in life
- Preoccupation with death
- Dramatic mood changes: anxious, reckless or agitated
- Suddenly happier, calmer
- Loss of interest in things they usually care about
- Setting their affairs in order
- Giving things away
- Unusual calling/visiting people one cares about—saying goodbyes
- Stockpiling meds or obtaining a weapon

If you know of someone—a neighbor, friend, family member—you are probably asking yourself **what can I do** if I am seeing some of these warning signs along with risk factors?

## WAYS TO BE HELPFUL:

- Be direct. Talk calm and matter-of-factly about suicide
- LISTEN and allow expression of feelings. Accept the feelings.
- Be aware that acting shocked will put distance between you and them.
- Be non-judgmental. Put aside your own beliefs about whether suicide is right or wrong, or good or bad. Lecturing about the value of life will only add to their hopelessness and guilt.
- Don’t dare them to do it or try to call their bluff.
- Don’t be sworn to secrecy.
- Offer your genuine care and help them to know that viable alternatives are available.



Above all offer to get help from persons and agencies that specialize in suicide intervention. Most persons with the above warning signs can be treated successfully with therapy or medications, or a combination of both. You can contact the following numbers for assistance in your community: **1-866-217-5808** or **9-1-1 for emergency**