Suicide is a serious public health problem that can have lasting harmful effects on individuals, families, and communities. It is among the top ten leading causes of death for Americans. There are over twice as many suicides as homicides reported in the United States, solidifying suicide as the most common manner of violent death.

To help identify ways to prevent suicide, CDC’s National Violent Death Reporting System (NVDRS) links information about the “who, when, where, and how” from death investigation data on suicides, and provides insight about why suicides occurred. This snapshot includes data on 25,850 suicides from 32 states that participated in NVDRS in 2016.

Characteristics of those who died by suicide:

By sex:
- 77% Male
- 23% Female

By age:
- 14% 10-24
- 17% 65+
- 32% 25-44
- 37% 45-64

Why:
Mental health problems are an important contributing factor to suicide — 49% of people who died by suicide had an identified mental health problem, most commonly depression. However, this means that over half did not have a known mental health problem. It is important to consider other contributing circumstances such as life stressors. Among individuals aged 10 years and older with known information about the circumstances contributing to suicide (91%):
- 31% experienced a crisis in the prior two weeks or an impending crisis
- 29% had an alcohol or other substance use problem
- 28% experienced a problem with a current or former intimate partner
- 22% experienced a physical health problem
- 16% had a financial and/or job problem
- 16% were involved in an argument or conflict

Resources for Information and Action:
Everyone has a role to play in suicide prevention.
Learn more and take action.

Vital Signs: Suicide Rising Across the US
National Violent Death Reporting System
CDC’s Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System
CDC Suicide Prevention

Prevention
Suicide is a serious but preventable public health problem. CDC released Preventing Suicide: A Technical Package of Policy, Programs, and Practices to describe the best available evidence for suicide prevention.

Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-8255