

Risk Factors of Suicide

Risk factors are characteristics that make it more likely a person will think about, attempt, or die by suicide. For example, studies suggest that some health conditions are associated with an increased risk of suicide, like having a traumatic brain injury. Risk factors do not cause or predict suicide.



Individual:

- Previous suicide attempt
- Mental health and/or substance use disorders, such as depression
- Social isolation
- History of incarceration
- Financial issues
- Impulsive or aggressive tendencies
- Job problems or loss
- Legal problems
- Serious illness
- Substance use disorder
- Changes in use of alcohol and drugs should be added
- Adverse childhood experiences such as child abuse and neglect
- Bullying
- Family history of suicide
- Relationship problems such as a break-up, violence or loss
- Sexual violence

Societal:

- Stigma associated with mental illness or help-seeking
- Easy access to lethal means among people at risk (e.g., firearms, medications)
- Unsafe media portrayals of suicide

Community:

- Barriers to health care
- Cultural and religious beliefs (e.g., a belief that suicide is noble) resolution of a personal problem
- Suicide cluster in the community