



Pennsylvania Adult/Older Adult Suicide Prevention Task Force

Suicide and Serious Mental Illness Fact Sheet

What we Know:

- **Serious mental illness is a major risk factor for suicide; 20% of all individuals that completed suicide had a serious mental illness**
- **Suicide is preventable**

What are the key risk factors of suicide for those with a serious mental illness?

- A recent psychiatric hospitalization
- Prior suicide attempt and/or deliberate self-harm
- Feelings of depression or hopelessness
- Prior ineffective treatment
- Co-occurring alcohol and drug use
- Significant loss (loved one/family member/important relationship, job)
- Family history of suicide

What are some important protective factors?

- Solid support system, including peer support
- Individualized treatment
- A willingness and ability to seek help
- Restricted access to firearms, weapons, or unused medications

What are some of the early warning signs of suicide risk?

(Contact a mental health or medical provider if you encounter any of these behaviors):

- Hopelessness
- Increasing alcohol and drug use
- Withdrawal from family, friends, supports
- Anxiety, agitation, sleep problems

What are the immediate danger signs of high suicide risk?

Immediately call 9-1-1 or the local crisis center or 1-800-273-TALK (8255) if you encounter:

- Someone threatening to hurt or kill herself or himself
- Someone talking, writing, or drawing about death, dying, or suicide

For additional fact sheets and further information on mental health services in Pennsylvania, please use the following link: <http://parecovery.org/index.shtml>