

Suicide and Mental Illness

BY THE STATEWIDE OFFICE OF SUICIDE PREVENTION, FLORIDA OFFICE OF DRUG CONTROL

Although a significant number of suicides are not related to mental illnesses, it is widely accepted that 90% of suicide victims have one or more psychiatric disorders at the time of suicide (suicidology.org). In spite of this high prevalence rate, half the people who die by suicide have never seen a mental health professional and up to two -

Individuals with certain mental illnesses are at greater risk of attempting suicide, such as depression, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, personality disorders and post-partum depression.

According to the National Strategy for Suicide Prevention, an estimated 2-15% of people

Studies show that 90% of suicide victims have one or more

thirds are not receiving treatment at the time of their death (Weyrauch & Scallet, 2002).

Having a mental illness, can increase the likelihood of suicide (sprc.org). Further, the risk of suicide greatly increases with co-morbidity – having more than one illness at the same time.

There are three sets of risk factors typically identified among those with mental illnesses that relate to suicidal behavior. First, suicide risk reflects the accumulation of years of adverse social influences.

Research findings indicate a relationship between early prenatal loss, childhood sexual abuse, and other childhood trauma and suicidal behavior in adults to suicide (Davidson, Hughes, et al, 1996). Second, biological factors play a significant role in the occurrence of suicide,

specifically having reduced levels of the brain chemical serotonin. Finally, as with most behaviors and illnesses, genetic factors exert influence.

psychiatric disorders at the time of suicide



who have been diagnosed with major depression die by suicide. Suicide risk is highest in depressed individuals who feel hopeless about the future, those who have just been discharged from the hospital, those who have a family history of suicide and those who have made a suicide attempt in the past. People who die by suicide are frequently suffering from undiagnosed, undertreated, or untreated depression. An estimated 6 -

15% of persons diagnosed with schizophrenia die by suicide; in fact, it is the leading cause of premature death in those with this illness (sprc.org).

Mental illness is real and can be just as de -

Half have never seen a mental health professional.

ilitating as a physical ailment. To learn more information, see your doctor or call 1-800-273-TALK for help.