

## Caregiver Bulletin



# Suicide Among People with Disabilities

We may make assumptions about people with disabilities' risk for suicide.

A 2021 report published in the [American Journal of Preventive Medicine](#) found people with disabilities are more likely to think about, plan or attempt suicide than people without disabilities.

In 2022, a university in Florida further researched the topic and found people with functional limitations in selfcare or independent living had the highest risk of suicidal thoughts, suicide planning and suicide attempts.

*Call 911 if someone is in danger.*

*Call or text 988, the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline to speak with a crisis professional any time of the day or night.*

## Learn more

- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline <https://988lifeline.org/>
- UW's In The Forefront <https://intheforeground.org/>



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## Risk Factors

- Feeling isolated or disconnected from people and the community.
- Feeling like a burden to others.
- Thinking others would be better off if they were dead.
- Difficulties communicating feelings (these can be physical, intellectual or emotional difficulties).
- Limited community access.

## What You Can Do as a Caregiver

- An active and connected life is the best prevention for self-harm and suicide.
- Take time to understand and connect with the person you support.
- Help them find and participate in regular social activities.
- Help them get out of the house multiple times a week.
- Create fun routines, rituals and traditions with them.
- Find ways they can contribute to the community by volunteering, participating in social groups and special events.

## What To Look For

- Some individuals have difficulty communicating with words. Learn how the people you support respond to discomfort, pain and disappointment.
- Do they seem "off" but aren't sick? They might be suffering from emotional pain.
- Look for changes in behavior, disposition, and responses to everyday activities.
- When you see changes like these, let your supervisor and or the individual's doctor know.

## When To Get Help

If you are concerned someone may be thinking about suicide, ask, "Are you thinking about hurting yourself?" Listen to the response. Offer to help the person to connect with someone who can help. Treat any talk of harm or killing oneself seriously. Tell your supervisor or the individual's doctor immediately if the person is feeling like hurting themselves. You can help the most by helping the person connect with a professional.