

Mental Illness and Suicide

Although the great majority of people who suffer from a mental illness do not die by suicide, having a mental illness does increase the likelihood of suicide compared to people who do not have one.

- An estimated 2-15 % of persons 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.
- An estimated 3-20% of persons who have been diagnosed with bipolar disorder die by suicide. Hopelessness, recent hospital discharge, family history, and prior suicide attempts all raise the risk of suicide in these individuals.
- An estimated 6-15% of persons diagnosed with schizophrenia die by suicide. Suicide is the leading cause of premature death in those diagnosed with schizophrenia. Between 75 and 95% of these individuals are male.
- Also at high risk are individuals who suffer from depression at the same time as another mental illness. Specifically, the presence of substance abuse, anxiety disorders, schizophrenia and bipolar disorder put those with depression at greater risk for suicide.
- People with personality disorders are approximately three times as likely to die by suicide than those without. Between 25 and 50% of these individuals also have a substance abuse disorder or major depressive disorder.
- People who die by suicide are frequently suffering from undiagnosed, undertreated, or untreated depression.