



Suicide Awareness and Prevention #65-10-25

People with developmental disabilities can be at a higher risk for suicide because of different risk factors, including co-occurring mental health diagnoses. Knowing the warning signs for suicide and how to get help can save lives.

Signs and Symptoms

These behaviors may be signs that someone is thinking about suicide:

- Talking about wanting to die
- Feeling hopeless, empty, or trapped
- Talking about being a burden
- Looking for ways to harm themselves
- Using more drugs or alcohol
- Withdrawing from friends and family
- Big changes in sleep or eating
- Acting anxious, angry, or reckless
- Talking a lot about death
- Saying they feel guilt, shame, or pain

What You Can Do

- Look for warning signs
- Remove things they could use to hurt themselves — especially guns
- Help them list healthy ways to cope (like music, exercise, journaling)
- Find people or activities that can distract and support them
- Involve trusted family or friends to help
- Tell their doctor, therapist, or other helpers
- Share emergency contacts like 988, 911, or their care team
- Create a safety plan together
- Check in on them regularly

A person with disabilities may also have other factors that make them more likely to commit suicide, including their disability status, mental health diagnosis, a history of trauma, recent stressful life events, chronic pain, or impulsive actions and agitation.



Ohioans who are experiencing a mental health or addiction crisis, and their family members, can call, text, or chat the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline to reach a trained specialist who can offer help and support. The easy-to-remember, three-digit number provides 24/7, free and confidential support to Ohioans in a behavioral health crisis. 988 is a direct connection to compassionate, accessible care and support for anyone experiencing mental health related distress. That could be:

- thoughts of suicide,
- mental health or substance use crisis, or
- any other kind of emotional distress.

Ohio's 988 plan is part of the state's larger commitment to providing quality, person-centered crisis supports in communities across the state.



Check-in, Make a Difference

People with disabilities, families, direct support professionals, supervisors, co-workers, and everyone else in Ohio's support system can benefit from some additional connections.

During this difficult time, everyone needs a little extra support. Checking in with someone and making a difference is as easy as 1, 2, 3.

Contact

A single contact can make all the difference. If you suspect someone you care for is going through a rough time, reaching out is the first step to providing the help they may need. You can be the one who initiates the connection that could potentially save a life.

Questions

All it takes is asking two simple questions to make someone feel connected and cared for:

- "How are you? You don't seem like yourself, and I want to know how you're really feeling because I care about you."
- "Do you need to talk? Sometimes talking can help make things feel a little bit better."

Resources

Coping with stress in a healthy way will make you, the people you care about, and your community stronger.

[Suicide Prevention Toolkit](#)

[988 Plain Language](#)

[Safety Plan Template](#)

[The ARC Suicide Prevention Video](#)

Additional resources can be found at [The Department of Behavioral Health](#) and [The Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities](#)

When it's a Crisis

- Do not leave a person alone if they acknowledge thoughts of suicide. It is important to connect them to help and support. **Call 988** the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline to be connected to a trained person who can help you find resources in your area.
- If the person is in imminent danger — if they are trying to harm themselves or have already made a suicide attempt — call 911 for immediate action.

Fast Facts

- The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported that there was one death by suicide every 11 minutes in 2023 and over 49,000 people died by suicide that year alone.
- According to the Ohio Department of Health (ODH), suicide was the second leading cause of death in Ohio for age groups 10-14 and 20-34 in 2023.
- In 2024, seven Ohioans with development disabilities died by suicide. This was the most reported.
- Every year, around 200 people with developmental disabilities makes a suicide attempt.