

STRATEGIES for MINDFUL LIVING

Courtesy of UAB Employee Assistance & Counseling Center

Suicide Prevention Resources, Risk Factors and Ways to Help

September is National Suicide Prevention Month, a time to raise awareness and promote vital conversations about mental health. Suicide remains a significant public health concern, with more than 800 suicide deaths recorded in Alabama each year. Recognizing risk factors and warning signs, and knowing where to find help, can help you support yourself or someone who may be struggling.

■ Risk Factors

Risk factors are characteristics of a person or his or her environment that increase the likelihood that he or she will die by suicide (i.e., suicide risk).

Major risk factors for suicide include:

- Prior suicide attempt(s)
- Misuse and abuse of alcohol or other drugs
- Mental disorders, particularly depression and other mood disorders
- Access to lethal means
- Knowing someone who died by suicide, particularly a family member
- Social isolation
- Chronic disease and disability
- Lack of access to behavioral health care

■ Protective Factors

Protective factors are personal or environmental characteristics that help protect people from suicide.

Major protective factors for suicide include:

- Effective behavioral health care
- Connectedness to individuals, family, community, and social institutions
- Life skills (including problem solving skills and coping skills, ability to adapt to change)
- Self-esteem and a sense of purpose or meaning in life
- Cultural, religious, or personal beliefs that discourage suicide



■ Warning Signs to Watch For

- Talking about wanting to die, feeling hopeless or feeling like a burden
- Withdrawing from friends, family, or favorite activities
- Major changes in sleep, mood, or eating habits
- Giving away personal possessions or behaving recklessly

■ Resources

If you or someone you know is struggling or in crisis, help is available. You can call or text 988 or chat at 988lifeline.org in the United States and Canada to reach the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Services are free and confidential.

For additional help or more information, resources include:

- **Birmingham Crisis Line:** 205-323-7777
- **Crisis Text Line:** Text "UAB" to 741-741
- **Suicide Prevention Lifeline:** 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
- **NAMI Alabama:** namialabama.org
- **NAMI Birmingham:** namibham.org
- **UAB Cares:** uab.edu/uabcare