



Frequently Asked Questions

To best address our audience, we have chosen some questions from emails the Foundation has received. Many of these questions come from young teens struggling to understand the suicide attempts of friends, and trying to learn how they can help.

1. **What percentage of college students who kill themselves are male? Why do you think more/ less boys than girls kill themselves?**

Seventy-five to 80 percent are boys although more girls attempt suicide. Boys are more involved than girls in all forms of aggressive and violent behavior.

2. **I've heard that suicides are more frequent around the holidays? Is this true, and if so, how much do they increase at that time?**

Suicides are not more frequent during the holidays. It appears that the rates are the highest in April, and the summer months, June and July.

3. **It is often said that a suicidal person goes through a period where he seeks for help from other people. Does this then mean that it could be ultimately the fault of other people (because they don't appear concerned enough) that one decides to kill him/herself?**

Not a fair conclusion, although it could be a contributing factor in some cases particularly with elderly, terminally ill people.

4. **What is the biggest cause of suicide among college students?**

Ninety-five percent are suffering from mental illness, usually depression. If depressed, substance abuse, anxiety, impulsivity, rage, hopelessness and desperation increase the risk.

5. **Apart from talking to a suicidal person and encouraging him/her to go for counseling, what else can we do to prevent this?**

Going with someone to the counselor often helps. If the person won't listen to you, you may need to talk to someone who might influence him or her. Saving a life is more important than violating a confidence.

6. **People often get uncomfortable when one discloses something as intimate and frightening as suicidal thoughts. What do you think can be done to reduce this stigma, either of suicidal people, or of depressive patients? Can people actually "change" their minds and accept someone who is suicidal?**

As people recognize that suicidal behavior is the result of a medical condition not a sign of weakness or character defect it will change.

7. **What is the most frequent method of suicide? Is the most frequent method different for men and women?**

Fifty-two percent of all people who kill themselves do so with a firearm, accounting for almost 17,000 deaths each year in the U.S. Use of a firearm is the number one method in those aged 35 and up.