

WORLD SUICIDE PREVENTION DAY 10 SEPTEMBER 2025

Zimbabwe joins the rest of the world in commemorating World Suicide Prevention Day on 10 September 2025 under the theme "Changing the Narrative on Suicide". This theme challenges all of us to end harmful myths, reduce stigma and open compassionate conversation about suicide.

It is estimated that there are currently 700 000 suicides per year worldwide. Suicide is the fourth leading cause of death among 15-19 year olds (WHO). Every suicide attempt is a cry for help and suicide thoughts are a symptom of an underlying mental health problem. Most people do not want to die but want the pain to go. Treatment is effective in many cases, but the

first step is to ask for help.

Women are more likely to make attempts. Men are more successful because they use lethal means. Women mostly talk about their

Who is at risk?

- Those with history of mental illness
- Serious physical health conditions including pain.
- Perceived burdensomeness to the family and friends
- Repeated exposure to traumatic life events result in habituation to painful life circumstances.
- Prolonged stress such as harassment, bullying, relationship problems or unemployment.
- Stressful life events, like rejection, divorce, financial crisis, other life transitions or loss.
- Hopelessness with life.
- Depression is the most common condition associated with suicide.
- History of suicide in family and communities-this has led to copycat suicides by many youth which is imitative suicidal behaviour that occurs after exposure to another suicide.
- History of attempted previous suicide is the greatest predictors of a completed suicide.
- Drug and alcohol consumption deepen feelings of remorse and lower inhibitions related to fear of death.



WHO IS AT RISK?

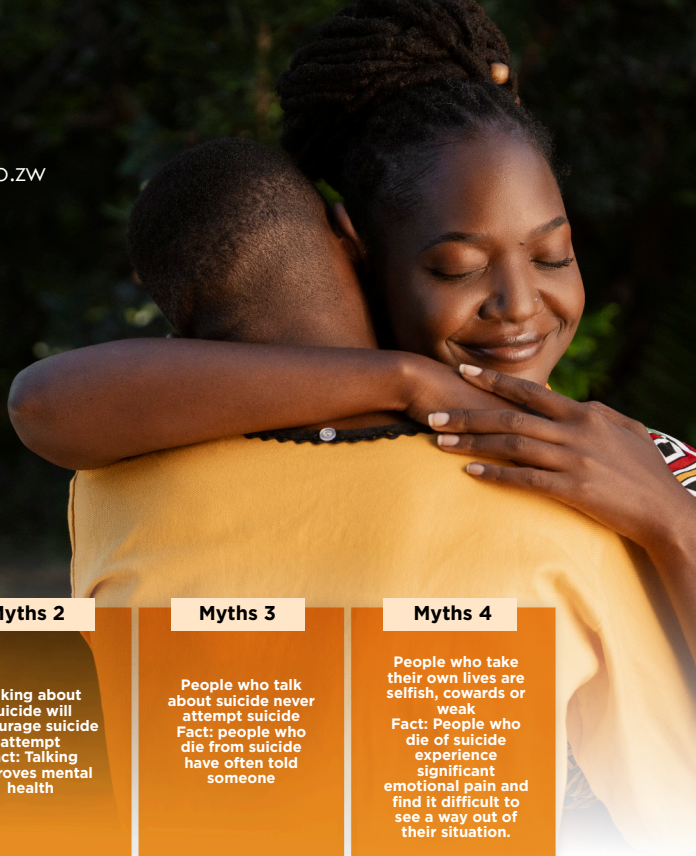
According to the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention there are categories of suicide warning signs to look out for:

Talk	What a person says can be an important indicator of suicide ideations. If someone talks about killing themselves, feeling hopeless, being a burden, having no reason to live or feeling trapped, be concerned.
Behaviour	<p>A person's behaviour especially when related to a big event, loss or change can be an indicator of suicide risk. Behaviour to watch include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increase use of substances and reckless behaviour• Looking for a way to end life• Isolating from friends and relatives• Visiting or calling people to say goodbye or giving away prized possessions• Symptoms of depression, such as aggression and sleeping
Mood	<p>Depression is the most common condition that is associated with suicide. Depression, anxiety, loss of interest or irritability are all moods that can indicate someone is considering suicide.</p>



How to Change the narrative?

- Normalise seeking mental health help
- Openly talk about suicide at workplaces, churches and social gatherings
- DE- stigmatise mental health issues
- Be your brother's keeper
- Encourage man to openly talk about their problems.
- Changing cultural narratives like "Boys do not cry" to Let the boy child Cry



Myths 1

Suicide attempts or deaths happen without warning
Fact: There are always warning signs before suicide attempt

Myths 2

Talking about suicide will encourage suicide attempt
Fact: Talking improves mental health

Myths 3

People who talk about suicide never attempt suicide
Fact: people who die from suicide have often told someone

Myths 4

People who take their own lives are selfish, cowards or weak
Fact: People who die of suicide experience significant emotional pain and find it difficult to see a way out of their situation.

Take Home Nuggets

- Every suicide attempt is a cry for help hence be your brother's keeper
- Every failed suicide attempt should be viewed as an opportunity to save a life mostly by being supportive to the individual.
- Most people do not want to die but want the pain to go.
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Danger period often comes after therapy and treatment when depression begins to lift as energy and motivation increase, then one is likely to carry out the act.

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