

# Understanding Suicide

Suicide is the conscious and deliberate act of killing oneself. Almost anybody can be at risk. Most adults have vague suicidal thoughts once or twice in their lifetimes. Fortunately, most do not act on those thoughts, but shift their energies to more positive and productive actions.

## How Many Victims?

Almost 45,000 people in the U.S. take their own lives each year. They are among the 800,000 people worldwide who kill themselves in an average year. These suicides occur in every ethnic group, gender, occupation, geographic area and socioeconomic status.

Suicide isn't just a problem among adults. Teenagers and young adults are particularly vulnerable. In fact, suicide is the second leading cause of death in young people between the ages of 15 and 24. Deliberate suicidal actions have even occurred in children as young as seven years old.

Every 12 minutes a suicide occurs in the U.S. No fewer than six other people are intimately affected by each loss. Sadly, some of those affected by the suicide of a loved one may follow the actions of their loved one and take their own lives in the future. Children who have lost a parent or a brother or sister to suicide, for example, are more likely to die by suicide themselves.



### QuickNote

Most people who are thinking about suicide show certain signs, symptoms and behaviors that can be recognized by people who are familiar with these signals. Once detected, these signals can be acted upon and many lives can be saved because the majority of suicides are preventable.