

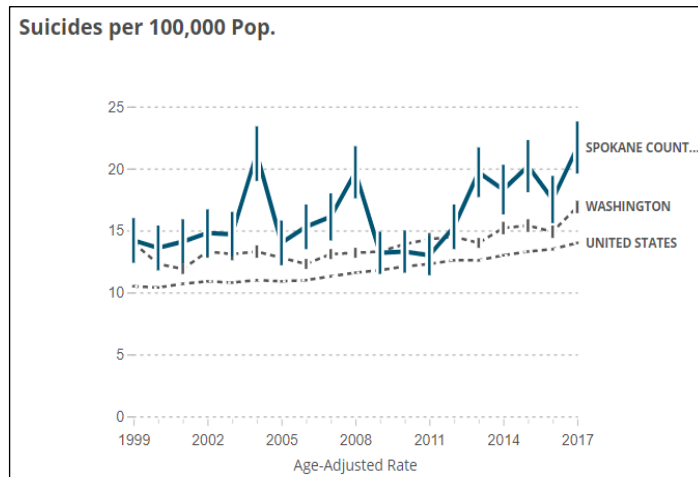


Managing Stress, Fighting Depression & Preventing Suicide

Fast facts

Fast Facts about Suicide

- Suicide is the 10th leading cause of death in the U.S. Each year, over 43,000 Americans die by suicide, according to the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention.
- In 2017, 113 suicides were committed in Spokane. Suicide rates have consistently been higher in Spokane than the state and national averages.
- For the past two decades, suicide rates have been on the rise in the U.S., particularly among men age 45–64 and girls age 10–14.
- Women exposed to partner violence are nearly 5 times more likely to attempt suicide than other women.
- Suicide rarely happens without warning, but the signs may not be obvious. The person may try to mask their struggles. **Indicators** may (but not always) include an increase in substance abuse or anxiety level, difficulty sleeping, expressing feelings of being trapped or without purpose, a history of depression or other mental illnesses, being a victim of any form of violence, previous suicide attempts, or dramatic mood changes. Social withdrawal, uncontrolled anger, and reckless behavior also are causes for concern.
- Other things that contribute to the suicide rate often include unsafe media portrayals of suicide and stigma associated with seeking help for mental illness.
- If someone you know shows signs of being suicidal, follow up on your instincts. Ask them directly if they are thinking about it. You can say, “I care about you. Some of the things you've said or done have made me wonder if you are thinking about killing yourself?” By saying this, you won't “give someone the idea.” Instead, if you broach the topic, you can make it okay for the person to share their struggles with you.
- If someone you know says they are considering suicide: don't judge and don't deny. Responses like, “I'm sure you don't mean that!” or “Don't say that!” tell the person that you are denying their perspective or that you are too uncomfortable to listen or that you don't care about them. Also, don't promise to keep it a secret. Do offer to go with them to **seek support** from a counsellor or medical professional. See our Additional Information page for resources.



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Fast Facts about Stress

- A great start to **stress management** is to recognize the signs of your body's response to stress. This could be difficulty sleeping, increased alcohol/other substance use, irritability, feeling depressed, or having low energy.
- Experiment with practices to lower your stress level. Too much to do? Set firm goals and priorities. Try a soothing activity or regular exercise and see how it affects you during high stress times. Set aside quality time with family or friends to feel less isolated. Talk with your doctor or therapist about good strategies for you.
- Not all stress is bad. In a dangerous situation, stress signals the body to prepare for a fight or flight response. In non-life-threatening situations, stress can motivate people, such as when they need to take a test or interview for a new job.
- With **chronic stress**, those same lifesaving reactions in the body can disturb the immune, digestive, cardiovascular, sleep, and reproductive systems. Over time, continued strain on your body from stress may contribute to serious health problems, such as heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, and depression.

Fast Facts about Depression

- Depression is the most common mental disorder in the United States.
- Depression affects 20 percent of all adult women, 10 percent of all adult men, and 5 percent of all adolescents worldwide.
- Serious depression isn't something that you can simply "get over" or break out of. There is nothing wrong with seeking professional help, just as you would if you got a really bad flu.

SOURCES

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