

SE PA Crisis Services (24/7)

Bucks County

Lenape Valley Fdn 800-499-7455

Chester County

Valley Creek Crisis Ctr 877-918-2100

Delaware County

CCMC Crisis Ctr 610-447-7600

Crisis Connections 855-889-7827

Montgomery County

MCES 610-279-6100

Philadelphia County

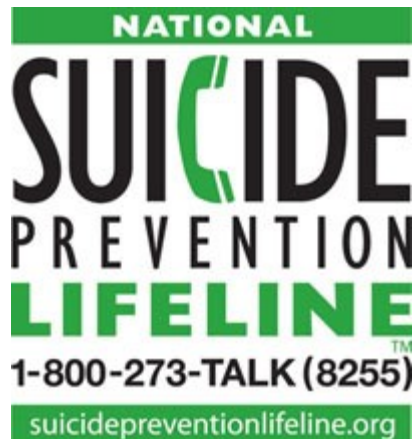
Northeast 215-831-2600

Northwest 215-951-8300

North 215-707-2577

Center City/South 215-829-5249

West/Southwest 215-748-8525



Protective Factors

These are some things that can deter suicidal thoughts and behaviors in elders:

- Believing in the value of life
- Having reasons for living
- Strong social connections and supports
- Hope for the future—optimistic outlook
- Spiritual beliefs against suicide
- Living in a positive and safe setting
- Sobriety/limited use of alcohol
- Feeling of personal control
- Sense of self-worth and self-esteem
- Willingness to use available services

High Risk Elders

- Men age 75 and older
- Elderly women with psychiatric histories
- Those living alone or in long term care
- Elders with self-injury backgrounds
- Retirees from high-risk occupations

This information is meant to be educational and not to take the place of advice and help from qualified health care sources.



Elder Suicide: What You Need to Know

**Montgomery County
Emergency Service
50 Beech Drive
Norristown, PA 19403
610-279-6100
www.mces.org
@MCES1**

Purpose

This brochure offers basic information about suicide risk in older adults. It is intended for those who care for and care about elders. ***Suicide is preventable at every age and is always a premature death that leaves behind loved ones and others to cope with traumatic loss.***

How a Suicide Happens

The exact cause of suicide is not known but a suicide attempt may occur when a strong intent to die and the ability for lethal self-harm come together.

A intense desire to die may result from an elder's *belief* that he or she is a burden to those close to them or they would be better off without him or her.

An ability for lethal self-harm may arise from trauma, abuse, pain, access to guns, alcohol abuse, military service.

Possible Triggers

- Interpersonal issues, separation
- Financial loss/exploitation/insecurity
- Loss of autonomy/self-care/dignity
- Death of spouse, other loved one
- Physical/sexual/emotional abuse
- Worsening chronic illness/disability

Some Warning Signs

- Talking of being trapped, losing control
- Increasing alcohol/medication misuse
- Withdrawal from family/friends
- Anxiety/agitation/sleep problems
- Mood changes, anger, growing pessimism, unnecessary risk-taking
- Growing self-neglect
- All or nothing, black/white thinking

Some Danger Signs

- Indifference to support/care regimens
- Giving away pets, tools, favored items
- Sleep disturbances, nightmares

Helping with Warning Signs

- Directly ask about suicide
- Call one of the numbers on the back panel of this brochure ASAP
- Stay with the elder or get someone else to, maintain contact as much as possible
- Don't believe they will get help on their own or if they say they are alright
- Remove guns/other means mentioned

When to Get Emergency Help

An elder needs immediate help when:

- Voicing/communicating to others clear thoughts of suicide
- Citing a specific suicide plan giving when and how
- Seeking a means of suicide

Any of these signal imminent dangerousness and you should immediately:

- Call the local crisis center
- Take the elder to the nearest hospital Emergency Department
- If these cannot be done call 911

Elder suicides are increasing every year in Pennsylvania and in our region.

Such deaths are likely to rise significantly as the high risk "Baby Boomer" generation ages.