



# Emergency Physicians: Everyone Should Learn the Signs of Suicide Risk

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WASHINGTON, DC—The American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP) urges everyone to learn to recognize the **warning signs of suicide** (</article/mental-health/suicide-know-the-warning-signs-know-how-to-help>), know what to do if someone is in a crisis, and understand the mental health resources available in your community.

“Emergency care is available 24/7 and emergency physicians are a lifeline for people experiencing a mental health crisis,” said L. Anthony Cirillo, MD, FACEP, president of ACEP. “However, sometimes the simplest steps can prevent an emergency or even save a life – don’t hesitate to check in with your friends and family and start a conversation about mental health.”

Suicide is a leading cause of death in the United States and affects people of all ages and backgrounds. Nearly 50,000 Americans die by suicide annually, according to the **American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (<https://afsp.org/suicide-statistics/>)**.

It is crucial to recognize signs that someone may be struggling. Warning signs can include talking about wanting to die or feeling hopeless, sudden withdrawal from friends and hobbies, increased use of alcohol or drugs, agitation or extreme mood swings, reckless behavior, insomnia or excessive sleep, or expressions of rage or revenge.

If you or someone you know is in immediate danger, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department. Emergency physicians can help stabilize anyone injured, keep people safe from self-harm, and connect those in distress with psychiatric care and support services.

For those showing signs of distress who are not in immediate crisis, it is important to talk with them, listen without judgment, and potentially discuss seeking help from a mental health professional. The **988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline (<https://988lifeline.org/>)** is available 24/7 so anyone in distress, or anyone concerned about a loved one, can call or text 988 and connect with trained counselors.

“The more we normalize seeking care for mental health struggles, the more lives we can all work together to save,” said Dr. Cirillo.

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**The American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP)** is the national medical society representing emergency medicine. Through continuing education, research, public education, and advocacy, ACEP advances emergency care on behalf of its 40,000

emergency physician members, and the more than 150 million people they treat on an annual basis. For more information, visit [www.acep.org](https://www.acep.org/) (<https://www.acep.org/>) and [www.emergencyphysicians.org](https://www.emergencyphysicians.org/) (/).

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