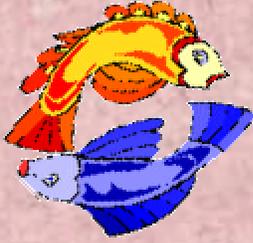


SUICIDE MYTHS / FACTS



People who commit suicide always leave notes. Most people don't leave notes. Only a small percentage leave any type of explanation about why they've chosen to take their lives.

People who commit suicide do not warn others. Out of 10 people who kill themselves, eight have given definite clues to their intentions. They leave numerous clues and warnings to others, although some of their clues may be non-verbal and difficult to detect.

People who talk about suicide are only trying to get attention, they won't really do it. WRONG! Few people complete suicide without first letting someone else know how they feel. Those who are considering suicide give clues and warnings as a cry for help. In fact, most seek out someone to rescue them. Over 70% who do threaten to complete suicide either make an attempt or complete the act.

Once someone has already decided to complete suicide, nothing is going to stop them. **Suicidal people clearly want to die.** Most of the time, a suicidal person is ambivalent about the decision; they are torn between wanting to die and wanting to live. Most suicidal individuals don't want death; they just want the pain of living to stop. Some people, seeing evidence of two conflicting feelings in the individual may interpret the action as insincerity, saying, "he really doesn't want to do it." People's ability to help is hindered if they don't understand the common suicidal characteristic of ambivalence.

Once the emotional state improves, the risk of suicide is over. The highest rates of suicide occur within about three months of an apparent improvement in a severely depressed state. Therefore, an improvement in emotional state does not mean a lessened risk.

After a person has attempted suicide, it is unlikely they will try it again. People who have attempted suicide are very likely to try again. In fact, 80% of people who complete suicide have made at least one previous attempt.

Don't mention suicide to someone who's showing signs of severe depression. It will plant the idea in their minds and they will act on it. Many depressed people have already considered suicide as an option. Discussing it openly helps the suicidal person sort through the problems and generally provides a sense of relief and understanding. It is one of the most helpful things you can do

Drug overdoses account for the majority of suicides. The number one method of suicide is firearms, with about 12,000 per year. Easy access to guns with a high potential for death makes this a deadly combination for those attempting suicide.