

SUICIDE : RECOGNISATION OF WARNING SIGNS AND PREVENTION

1. Suicide is the intentional killing of one's self. It is also defined as an act with a fatal outcome that is deliberately initiated and performed by the person in the knowledge of expectation of its fatal outcome. Suicide may occur for a number of reasons, including depression, shame, guilt, desperation, physical pain, emotional pressure, anxiety, financial difficulties etc. The WHO noted that over one million people commit suicide every year. The suicide rate in India is 11/100000 population (2nd in south East Asia). There are an estimated 10 to 20 million non fatal attempted suicide every year worldwide.

2. Suicide occurs in persons of all ages and backgrounds, but certain groups of people are at increased risk for suicide attempts. These include persons with a psychiatric illness and a past history attempted suicide. Males are more likely than females to commit suicide although attempts are more common in females. A family history of, or exposure to suicide altered levels of neurotransmitters in the brain and impulsivity are other factors that may increase an individual's risk of suicide.

3. Warning signs of suicide are varied. They may include:-

- Talk of, or preoccupation with, suicide or death, threatening suicide, writing about death or suicide.
- Signs of serious depression, including desperation, feelings of hopelessness, feeling no sense of purpose, loss of interest in things one used to care about, trouble sleeping.
- Withdrawal from family and friends.
- Reckless behavior, increased risk taking irritability.
- Making statements about life not being worth living, hating life, that the " world would be better off without me and similar feelings.
- Increased alcohol or drug use.
- Feelings of rage or uncontrolled anger.
- Seeking access to firearms, pills other methods to commit suicide.
- Changing wills, preoccupation with putting one's affairs in order.
- Dramatic changes in personality.

Prevention

4. While suicide is not universally preventable, it is possible to recognize some warning signs and symptoms that may enable you or your loved ones to access treatment before a suicide attempt. It has been estimated that up to 75% of suicide victims display some warning signs or symptoms. If you suspect suicidal thoughts in yourself or anyone seek professional help immediately. Go to a clinic, emergency room, or psychiatric facility. Do not leave an individual alone who has expressed thought of suicide.