

# The Connection

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## The FACTS:

- Suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death among college students.
- 18-24 year olds think about suicide more than any other age group.
- More males die from suicide than females however more females attempt suicide than males.
- On average, a young person under the age of 25 commits suicide every 2 hours.

Source: [www.suicide.org](http://www.suicide.org)

## For more information, check out these websites:

- [www.suicide.org](http://www.suicide.org)
- [www.ulifeline.org](http://www.ulifeline.org)
- [www.srpc.org](http://www.srpc.org)
- [www.jedfoundation.org](http://www.jedfoundation.org)
- [www.suicideprevention.uconn.edu](http://www.suicideprevention.uconn.edu)

## College and Suicide

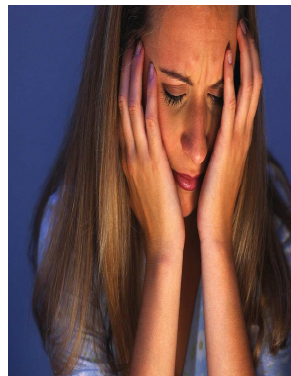
Ben appeared to be your typical college student. He was actively involved with his fraternity, working at his job, and just having a good time with his friends. But all of a sudden, something traumatic in his life occurred. Suffering from the tragic loss of one of his closest friends, Ben became depressed. His life took a complete turn for the worst and he found himself struggling to maintain control.

Ben no longer had the desire to do the things in his life that he had enjoyed. All of a sudden, he no longer had the desire to go to school, work, hang out with friends, or even eat or sleep. Feelings of hopelessness made Ben believe that there was no point in doing anything anymore if we are all going to die anyways. He wanted to end all his suffering and did not want to live anymore. Ben wanted to end his life.

Just like Ben, many people are struggling with depression and considering suicide. With suicide being the second leading cause of death among college students, more awareness and preventative measure are being taken to help individuals who are contemplating suicide and for those who know someone who shows signs of

suicidal behavior. So why are more college students thinking about ending their own lives?

College is a huge transition for all students. College offers students new freedoms and independence by living away from home. Many people are living away from home for the first time. But there are some risks with these new freedoms. Students have more freedom to try new things, such as experimenting with drugs and alcohol. Students also experience difficulty in transitioning into a new academic environment that brings new challenges and pressures to do well. Going to college is also a difficult transition period in which students may feel lost, lonely, confused, anxious, and stressed. And these problems may lead to depression. Some students who contemplate suicide suffer from other mental illnesses that could affect their judgment and from solving problems in a rational manner.



On campus, a student's problems can go easily unnoticed in a large class. There is no longer the close watchful eye from old friends, teachers and especially parents. That is why everyone should know how to identify the warning signs of suicidal behavior to help those who are in need of immediate help.

## Who are more at risk for suicide?

Some people who fall under these categories at risk of suicide:

- Young adults between the ages of 15 and 24 are more at risk.
- GLBTQ people are also more at risk.
- People who have attempted suicide before.
- Individuals feeling overwhelmed after a sudden loss.
- Alcohol and drug abusers are more at risk.
- Impulsive and aggressive individuals are more likely to act on suicidal impulses.
- Individuals with a family history of suicide attempts or mental illness.
- People who suffer from a mental illness such as depression or schizophrenia are at high risk.
- Individuals who have access to lethal arms or medication increases the risk of suicide.

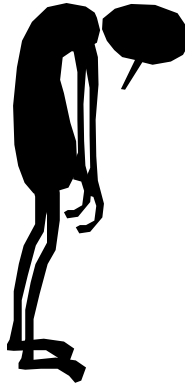
Source: [www.ulifeline.org](http://www.ulifeline.org)

## What are the Warning Signs?

Warning signs are indications that someone is at risk for suicide. Many individuals who are contemplating suicide will leave indications to their family and friends and those closest to them of their intent. This is why it is necessary to take all signs and threats seriously. It is also important to know that not all individuals who are considering suicide will show any of the warning signs mentioned below. There is no one cause of suicide. Rather, suicide is caused by a combination of several factors. The "causes" of suicide are different for everyone, so it is important for you to know understand your distress.

**VERBAL SIGNS:** *These statements should be taken very seriously as they are a major indication that someone may be trying to reach out for help!!*

- "I think I'll just kill myself."
- "No one cares if I live or die."
- "I feel so hopeless, nothing will ever change and get better."
- "I don't want to live anymore."
- "I'm hopeless...I can't even get good grades."
- "I just want to go to sleep and never wake up."
- Announcing that they have a plan to end their life!!



### NON-VERBAL SIGNS:

- Withdrawing from family, friends, and society.
- Increased use of alcohol and/or drugs.
- Failure to maintain hygiene and taking care of yourself.
- Loss of interest in usual activities.
- Difficulty sleeping, the loss or gain of weight.
- Sudden changes in mood and behaviors.
- Giving away of possessions.
- Feelings of hopelessness and anxiety.
- Symptoms of Depression, Bipolar Disorder, and Schizophrenia
- Looking for access to firearms, pills, or any other means that can be used to harm oneself.

\*\*\* If an individual is showing one or more of these behaviors, call CMHS at 860-486- 4705 or call 911 immediately!

Source: [www.cmhs.uconn.edu](http://www.cmhs.uconn.edu)

## Suicide can be prevented!

Most suicidal people want to live but do not know how to deal with their problems. Committing suicide may seem to be the only option they have left. But suicide can be prevented!

Even though some suicides occur suddenly, most people considering suicide will leave warning signs of their plan. That is why it is important for us to reach out to prevent this tragic event from occurring!

The first step in prevention, is recognizing the warning signs. If you do notice these warning signs in yourself or someone you know, it is important that you get immediate help!

The next step is to reach out to that person in need and get help! It is better if you reach out for help from others to assist you in this situation. That person needs people around who will be strong and supportive of their condition. So be a good friend and be supportive! It makes a big difference to have someone to talk to, whether it be friends, family, or others in their community. It is

important that they have people who will listen to what they have to say. Even if you just encourage them to seek help, you may save a life!



There are also other ways for people dealing with suicidal behaviors to get help. Attend crisis intervention programs such as the Suicide Prevention Week recently held at UConn. There are many organizations and websites online that offer advice and information for everyone. Consider talking to mental health professionals if you are looking for someone to talk about your life situation or even call a Suicide Prevention Hotline such as The National Suicide Prevention Hotline at 1-800-273-TALK.

\*\*\* However, if you do not know how to handle a situation or if the person refuses to get help and could be in danger, stay with that person until you can find someone who can help. Contact Counseling and Mental Health Services at 486- 4705 call a prevention hotline, or call 911! \*\*\*

## What protects people from attempting suicide?

In some cases, people who show signs of suicidal behaviors will not actually go through with their plan. So what protects people from committing suicide? There are some things in a person's life that can improve their behavior and influence their choices. By having these influences in their life, people are at a much lower risk for suicide. These protective factors include:

- Supporting and encouraging anyone who needs mental health treatment for any reason.
- Seeing mental health professionals for help.
- Having a strong social support system with your family, peers, and community.
- Having a sense of hope even if you are not okay.
- Experiencing positive life events by becoming more involved in your school and community.
- Building the skills to manage your emotions, impulsive behaviors, and establishing better relationships with those closest to you.
- Improving your problem-solving and conflict resolution skills and finding non-violent ways to solve your problems.
- Maintaining strong religious beliefs, especially those that discourage suicide.
- Restricting access to any lethal means that could be used to harm oneself.

Source: Department of Health and Human Services, 1999.

## QPR Training: Ask a Question... Save a Life!

At UConn, Counseling and Mental Health Services has developed a campus-wide outreach and education program that focuses on the prevention of suicide. It is called **QPR: Question, Persuade, and Refer**. The purpose of QPR is to train the UConn community in suicide prevention. By using the QPR model, CMHS wants to train students, faculty, staff, and parents on how to recognize the warning signs of suicidal behavior and how to refer people in distress to resources on campus and the community.

QPR is free and consists of a 1 1/2 hour workshop that introduces basic QPR curriculum, demonstrates an interactive case study, and includes a question and discussion period. Informational handouts are given to all participants.

After receiving QPR training, you will be able to recognize the warning signs of someone that might be considering suicide. You will also be able to identify a crisis and how to apply the three

steps of QPR (question, persuade, and refer) for those individuals in need of help. You will also have the necessary skills to help you handle any situation you come across and to act with *confidence*. You will be able to make a difference in the life of someone else.

**Register for QPR Training at:**

**[www.suicideprevention.uconn.edu](http://www.suicideprevention.uconn.edu)**

### Suicide Prevention Quiz!

Take this quiz to test your knowledge of suicide prevention and also learn about other resources available and how you can help yourself and others who may be at risk for suicide.

The QPR program is sponsored by the Vice President for Student Affairs and the Vice-Provost for undergraduate Education and Regional Campus Administration.

## IMMEDIATE HELP!!!

If you or someone you know is at risk of danger of hurting themselves and in need of immediate help, contact these emergency personnel to help you right away!

- **Counseling and Mental Health Services (CMHS):**  
**Call Day or Night:**  
**(860)486-4705**
- **Ambulance, Fire, or Police:** 911
- **Infoline Suicide Hotline:**  
1(800) 203-1234
- **National Runaway & Suicide Hotline:**  
1(800) 621-4000

With help comes hope  
NATIONAL

**SUICIDE PREVENTION**  
LIFELINE™

**1-800-273-TALK**  
[www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org)  
Help is available for you or someone you care about, 24-7



University of Connecticut

be aware  
show  
you  
**CARE**

**Counseling and Mental Health Services**

**Monday - Friday, 8:30am to 4:30pm**

**Come to the CMHS Annex**

**(located behind SHS) or call 486-4705**

**After hours, weekends and holidays call 860-486-4705, stay on the line and follow instructions.**

**Mental Health Online Screenings**

On the CMHS website, we offer Mental Health Screenings that allow you to assess yourself regarding **anxiety, depression, bipolar disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, and eating disorders**. The screenings ask basic demographic information from you and you then answer a series of questions to determine whether or not you have any of the symptoms associated with the concerns above.

\*\*\*Go to [www.counseling.uconn.edu](http://www.counseling.uconn.edu) and click on our Self- Help Page to learn more about our Screenings. \*\*\*

**Consultation Services**

If you are concerned with a student's well-being and do not know how help or if they do not want to seek any professional help, we encourage you to consult with our Therapist On Duty.

Call Counseling and Mental Health Services at:

**1(860) 486- 4705**

**To find more information about Suicide Prevention, visit our website at:**

[www.suicideprevention.uconn.edu](http://www.suicideprevention.uconn.edu)



University of Connecticut Student Health Services

*Counseling & Mental Health Services*

**CMHS**

Check us out Online!!!

[www.counseling.uconn.edu](http://www.counseling.uconn.edu)

**Mission Statement**

The mission of Counseling and Mental Health Services is to provide the highest quality clinical services to promote the emotional, relational, and academic potential of all students. We are committed to the core values of respect, responsiveness, innovation and quality to enhance the unique experience of each individual at the University of Connecticut.

**Multicultural Statement**

We value and appreciate the uniqueness and diversity of all individuals. Our commitment is to create an environment where all people feel welcome. We recognize the right of human beings to be treated with dignity and respect. We are dedicated to enhancing cultural sensitivity and cultural competency in all of our work. This promotes our growth as individuals and as a community.