

Pain Isn't Always Obvious

**KNOW  
THE SIGNS**

Suicide Is Preventable.org

# Suicide Prevention Among Men

## Presenter Info



WELLNESS - RECOVERY - RESILIENCE



# Each Mind Matters

**Each Mind Matters is California's Mental Health Movement.**  
We are millions of individuals and thousands of organizations working to advance mental health.



# Suicide Prevention – Know the Signs

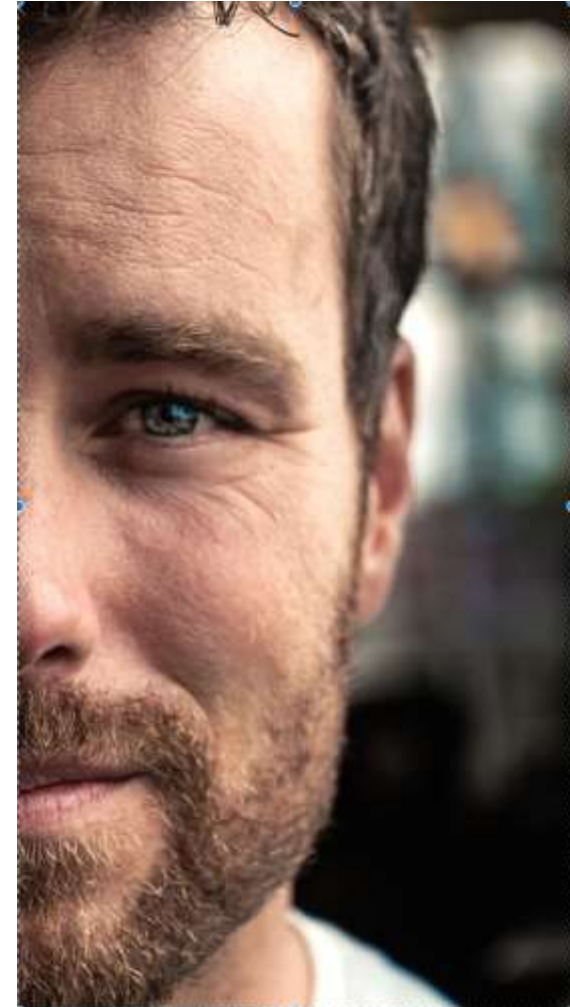
A statewide suicide prevention social marketing campaign with the overarching goal to increase Californians' capacity to prevent suicide by encouraging individuals to **know the signs, find the words** to talk to someone they are concerned about, and to **reach out** to resources.



[suicideispreventable.org](http://suicideispreventable.org)  
[elsuicidiodesprevenible.org](http://elsuicidiodesprevenible.org)

# Why focus on Men?

- Men are at disproportionately high risk of suicide
  - Rates are rising among men in the middle years
- Warning signs of depression and suicide may be missed – or misinterpreted
- Men often use highly lethal means, such as firearms, in their attempts



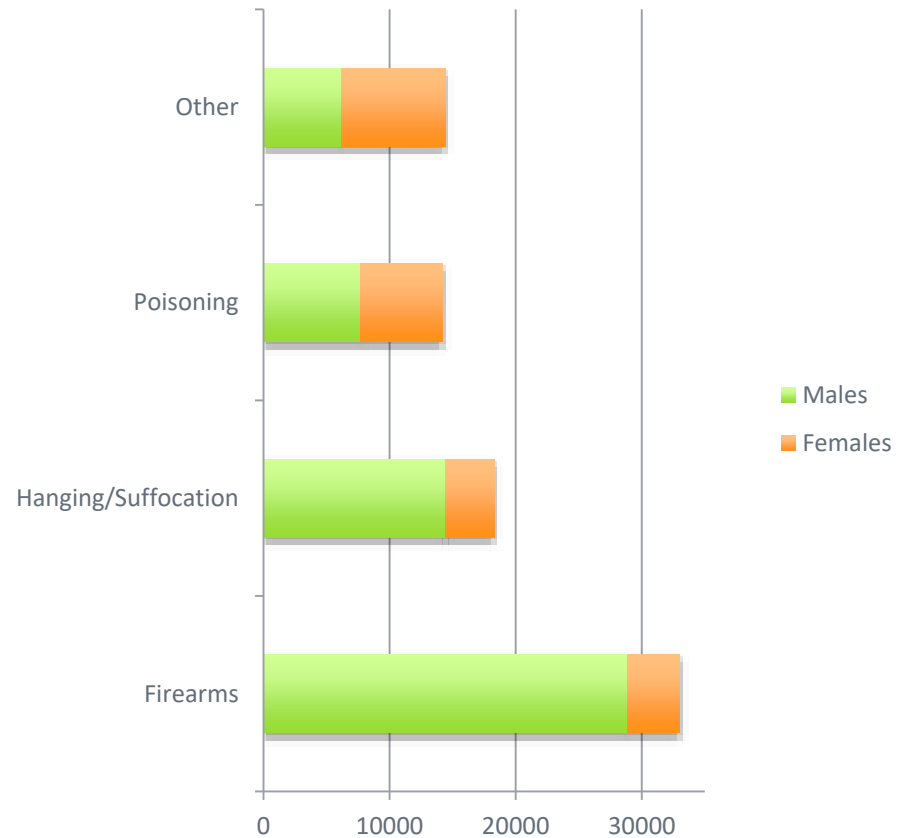
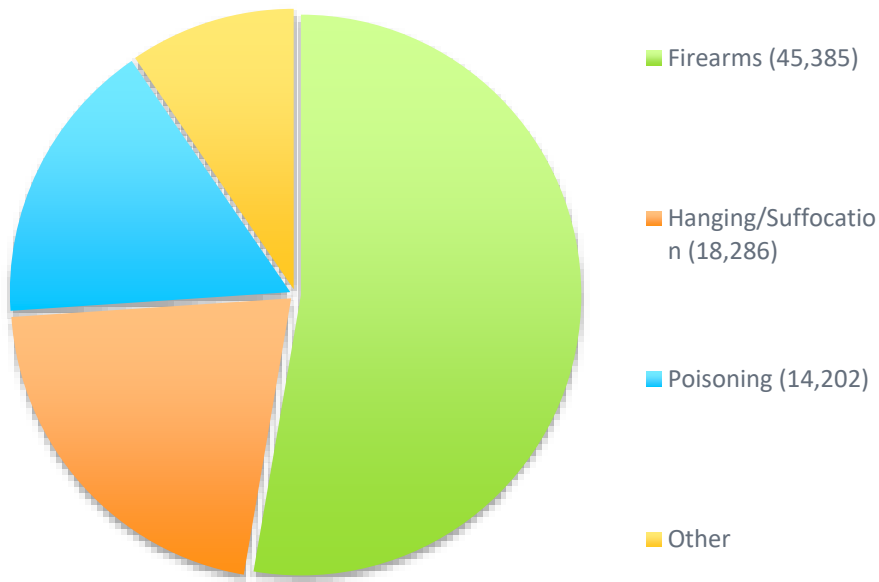
# CA Data on Suicide Among Men

- From 1993-2013, 73,705 Californians died by suicide
  - 78% (57,176) of those who died were male
- In 2013, more than one-third of California men who died of suicide were between the ages of 45-64.
  - 70% of the men were White, followed by Hispanic (17%) and Asian/Pacific Islander (8%).



# Means of Suicide

## Means of Suicide, California, 1993-2013



# Warning Signs and Risk Factors

## Warning signs:

Specific behavioral or emotional clues that may indicate suicidal intent (“red flags”)

## Risk factors:

Conditions or circumstances that may elevate a person’s risk for suicide

# Critical Warning Signs

- Threatening to hurt or kill oneself, or talking of wanting to hurt or kill oneself
- Looking for ways to kill oneself (purchasing a gun, stockpiling pills, etc.)
- Talking or writing about death, dying, or suicide, when these actions are out of the ordinary for the person

***These are especially concerning when the behavior is new, has increased, or seems related to a painful event , loss or change.***



# Additional Warning Signs for Men

- Feeling hopeless and/ or worthless; fear of becoming a burden.
- A preoccupation with death or a lack of concern about personal safety; recklessness.
- Feeling trapped, a sense of downward spiral and no way out
- Increasing use of substances, especially alcohol.
- Anger, irritability, resentment, seeking revenge
- Changes in sleep
- Withdrawal, isolation

# Risk Factors Among Men

- Depression or disrupted mood
- History of suicidal behavior or thinking
- Alcohol use disorders, intoxication
- Access to firearms
- Chronic or acute illness or disability
- Financial stressors both immediate (job loss, lay-offs) and/or ongoing (low income, low status occupation)



# Risk Factors Among Men (cont'd)

- Intimate partner problems (custody disputes, divorce, breakups, separation, intimate partner violence)
- Criminal justice involvement (arrest, incarceration, court cases, probation)
- At least one, and often many, life stressors that add up to a feeling of being overwhelmed, unable to turn things around.

# Sociocultural Risk Factors Among Men



- Men are often socialized to embody values such as strength, toughness, and being a good provider and protector of family and property
- Unhelpful conceptions of masculinity can become a barrier to help
- Their behavior and thinking may be easily misinterpreted
  - Family and friends might miss signs that “didn't look like depression”.

# 🎗️ What Might Depression Look Like in Men?

- Disrupted mood (anger, irritability, changes in sleep and appetite, negative perception of life events)
- Social isolation and coping strategies centered around avoidance (self-medicating, pushing people away, risk-taking)
- Physical symptoms such as sleep issues, fatigue, and chronic pain





# Protective Factors for Men

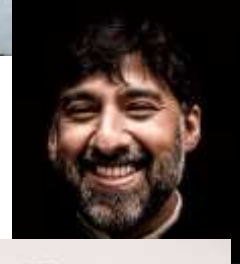
Factors that may make it LESS likely that a person will consider, attempt, or die by suicide

- Access to effective health and behavioral health care
- Social connectedness and emotional support
- Constructive coping and problem solving skills
- Reasons for living and sense of purpose



# Preventing Suicide in Men

- In a crisis, put as much separation between the individual and highly lethal means as possible.
- Encourage connection with social supports and services that can reduce the burden of life problems.
- Promote resiliency and enhance problem solving and coping skills.
  - Understand how depression and suicidality show up in men
- Support boys and young men to feel more comfortable with their feelings and to reach out when needed.
- Encourage men to act as supports and role models.



# Keys to Prevention

- Employ strategies to reduce access to lethal agents during a crisis
  - Firearms, substances
- Engage traditional AND non-traditional partners
  - Recreation, workplace, health care
- Providers and families understand the signs and symptoms of depression and suicidality for men





# How to Start the Conversation

There are many ways to have a discussion with someone you are concerned about:



- Ask directly about suicide if warning signs are present.

Here are some suggestions for starting the conversation.





## Some questions to start the conversation

- Sometimes, people in your situation lose hope. I'm wondering if you may have lost hope, too?
- Have you ever thought things would be better if you were dead?
- With this much stress, have you ever thought of hurting yourself?

# Crisis Support Resources

## Suicide Prevention Lifeline

24/7 hotline, plus chat services  
[www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org)

## National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

We can all help prevent suicide. The Lifeline provides 24/7, free and confidential support for people in distress, prevention and crisis resources for you or your loved ones, and best practices for professionals.

**1-800-273-8255**



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### FRIENDSHIP LINE

*"Give sorrow words: the grief that does not speak whispers the o'er-fraught heart and bids it break."*  
- William Shakespeare

For older men: **Friendship Line** (Institute on Aging):  
**(800) 971-0016**  
[www.ioaging.org](http://www.ioaging.org)

# Each Mind Matters Resources

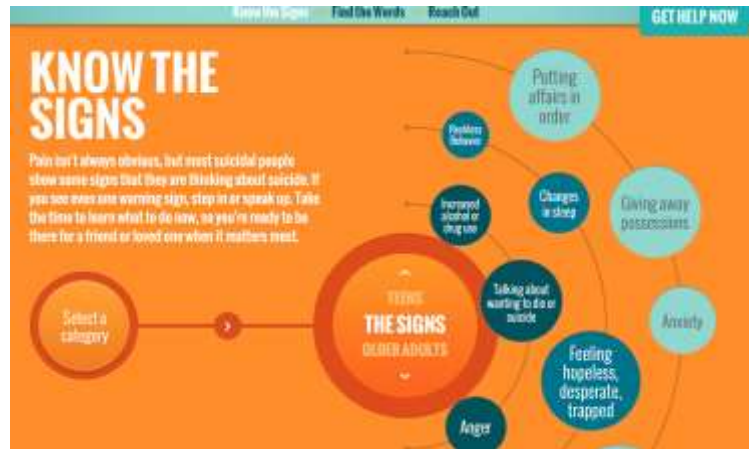
## Each Mind Matters

A wide range of suicide prevention resources are available in the Each Mind Matters Resource Center:

[www.EMMResourceCenter.org](http://www.EMMResourceCenter.org)



[www.elsuicidioesprevenible.org](http://www.elsuicidioesprevenible.org)



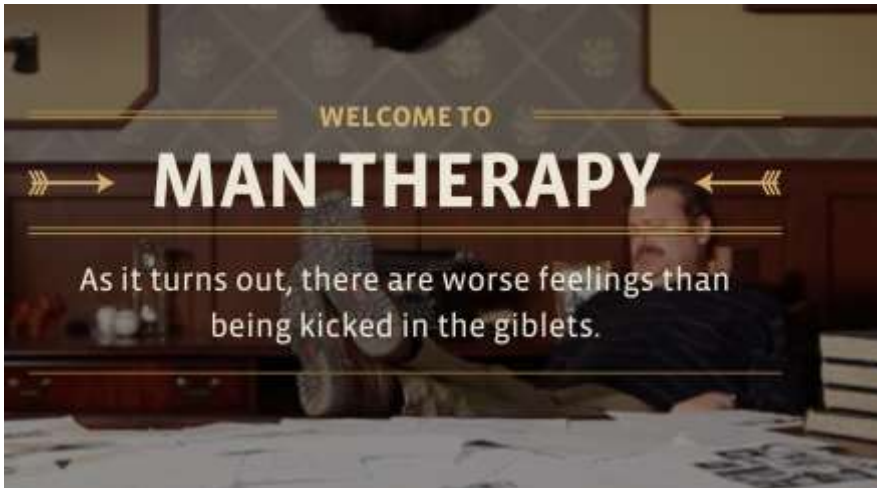
[www.SuicideisPreventable.org](http://www.SuicideisPreventable.org)

# Educational Campaigns



## San Diego: It'sUPtoUS

- <http://up2sd.org/men/>



## Colorado: Man Therapy

- <http://mantherapy.org>

# Lethal Means Resources



Online training for Counseling on Access to Lethal Means : <http://training.sprc.org/>

Harvard School of Public Health Means Matter campaign:

<https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/means-matter/>

Information on California Gun Violence Restraining Orders: [www.SpeakforSafety.org](http://www.SpeakforSafety.org)



 Thank You

## Presenter Info

