

## Where to Get Help

24 Hour Toll-Free Crisis Hotline  
for Warren & Clinton Counties  
1-877-695-6333  
OR 1-877-695-NEED

Solutions Community Counseling  
& Recovery Centers  
Warren County Office  
1-800-932-3366  
Clinton County Office  
937-383-4441

Talbert House  
Warren Outpatient Services  
513-932-4337

Survivors After Suicide Support  
Group  
For the group list, consult the  
American Foundation for Suicide  
Prevention, Cincinnati Chapter  
website at: [www.afsp.org](http://www.afsp.org)

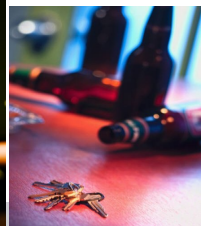
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For more information about the  
Coalition, contact:

Mental Health Recovery Services  
of Warren & Clinton Counties  
Lebanon, Ohio  
Phone 513-695-1695  
Fax 513-695-2997

[www.mhrsonline.org/  
suicidepreventioncoalition](http://www.mhrsonline.org/suicidepreventioncoalition)

## Depression, Drugs and Alcohol: A Deadly Mix



HELP IS AVAILABLE  
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or  
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# Depression, Substance Abuse and Suicide

## The Facts

In the U.S., a person dies by suicide every 17 minutes. This totals nearly 35,000 Americans each year. These individuals represent husbands and wives, mothers and fathers, sons and daughters, siblings, neighbors and co-workers — People we interact with every day.

The leading risk factor in suicide is depression. In fact, 90% of those who die by suicide suffered from a depressive illness. Unfortunately, this disease is not always diagnosed or treated.

The second major risk factor is drug or alcohol abuse. Particularly, the mix of depression and substance abuse places an individual at grave risk.

Studies have found that alcohol use increases the risk of suicidal behavior. In fact, 65% of suicide attempts and 50% of all completed suicides can be linked to alcohol use. About 70% of youth who attempt suicide are frequent alcohol and/or drug users.

Studies have found that there was extensive use of alcohol, especially by alcoholics, both immediately before and during suicide attempts.

Drinking, use of drugs, or both may reduce inhibitions and impair the judgment of someone contemplating suicide, making the act more likely. In addition to a greater frequency of suicide attempts, drug and alcohol abuse is linked with increased suicidal thoughts and more serious/lethal suicide attempts.

## Common Warning Signs

- Giving away favorite possessions
- A marked or noticeable change in an individual's behavior
- Previous suicide attempts and statements revealing a desire to die
- Depression (crying, insomnia, inability to think or function, excessive sleep or appetite loss)
- Inappropriate "good-byes"
- Verbal behavior that is ambiguous or indirect: "I'm going away on a real long trip. You won't have to worry about me anymore. I want to go to sleep and never wake up."
- Purchase of a gun or pills
- Alcohol or drug abuse
- Sudden happiness after long depression
- Obsession about death and talk about suicide
- Decline in performance of work, school, or other activities
- Deteriorating physical appearance, or reckless actions

## High Risk Life Events Associated With Suicide

- Death or terminal illness of a loved one
- Divorce, separation, or broken relationship
- Loss of health (real or imaginary)
- Loss of job, home, money, self-esteem, personal security
- Anniversaries
- Difficulties with school, family, the law
- Early stages of recovery from depression

## What Not To Do

- Do not leave the person alone if you feel the risk to their safety is immediate.
- Do not act shocked or condemn. There may not be another cry for help.
- Do not point out to them how much better off they are than others. This increases feelings of guilt and worthlessness.
- Do not suggest drugs or alcohol as a solution.
- Don't judge or argue with the person.

## What To Do

- Take suicide threats seriously, be direct, open and honest in communications.
- Listen, allow the individual to express their feelings and express your concerns in a non-judgmental way.
- Ask, "Are you having suicidal thoughts?" A detailed plan indicates greater risk.
- Take action sooner rather than later.
- Dispose of pills, drugs and guns.
- Contact a reliable family member or close friend of the person. Don't worry about being disloyal.

### GET PROFESSIONAL HELP!

Sources: "Suicide Prevention: A Plan for Ohio" and The Ohio Suicide Prevention Foundation

**It is estimated that  
1 out of 6  
of all substance abusers  
will die by suicide.**