

What are the facts about adolescent suicide in Montana?

- Suicide is the **second leading cause of death** for Montana youth ages 10-24.
- Only unintentional injuries such as car wrecks, drowning and fire kill more Montana youth than does suicide.
- On average, **every 2 weeks a Montana youth completes suicide.**
- This is not a new phenomenon. **Montana has ranked in the top 5 States for the highest rates of youth suicide** for the past several decades.
- **Alcohol and drug impairment, a sense of hopelessness, and underlying mental illness all contribute** to the high rate of youth suicide.
- In 2001, 27% of High School students in Montana reported they **felt so sad or hopeless almost every day** for two weeks or more in a row that they stopped doing some usual activities. (YRBS/OPI)
- Well over half of all Montana High School students have used alcohol within the past 30 days.
- Montana follows the same pattern as most of the United States: **females are more apt to attempt suicide, and males are more apt to complete suicide.** This is because more females choose reversible means such as poison, and more males choose irreversible means such as firearms.
- It is estimated that the **suicide-related medical costs in Montana** for a single year total over \$6 million. Lost future earnings tops \$19 million, and loss to quality of life is estimated at \$78 million.
- **The emotional and social cost of these losses is immeasurable.** Most every person in Montana has felt the hurt, anger, loss, and despair caused by this kind of preventable death.

What can be done to prevent the tragedy of youth suicide?

In 1999, the US Surgeon General recommended a 3-part approach to suicide prevention called “AIM”. This stands for “Awareness, Intervention, and Methodology”. Here are a few suggested ways to put this plan into action:

- **Awareness:** take a suicide “gatekeeper” training course. Sponsor a gatekeeper class for your club, workplace, church, or youth group. Consider becoming a trainer yourself.
- **Intervention:** put into practice what you have learned. Involve family, students, co-workers, and others in your community in activities that promote communication, problem solving skills, and improved mental health. Consider joining a suicide support group for your own emotional healing. Reach out to troubled youth and families to ensure they get proper care. Support improvement in mental health services and drug & alcohol treatment resources.
- **Methodology:** advance the cause and science of suicide prevention. Evaluate existing programs to ensure effectiveness. Gather data, and support projects and infrastructure for programs that work to decrease youth suicide.

Working together, we can take AIM to reduce adolescent suicide in Montana.

(see reverse side for resources)

Suicide Prevention Resources

Montana Resources:

Montana Suicide Prevention

www.montanasuicide.org

American Federation for Suicide Prevention, Montana Chapter

www.afspmontana.org

Surviving Our Loss After Suicide

www.suicide-montana.org

National Resources:

American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry (AACAP)

www.aacap.org

American Association of Suicidology

www.suicidology.org

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention

www.afsp.org

American Psychological Association (APA)

www.apa.org/psychnet

Children's Safety Network

www.childrensafetynetwork.org

National Center for Injury Prevention and Control

www.cdc.gov/ncipc

National Center for Suicide Prevention Training

www.ncspt.org/courses/orientation/id16.htm

National Institute of Mental Health

www.nimh.nih.gov

National Mental Health Association

www.nmha.org

National Strategy for Suicide Prevention

www.mentalhealth.org/suicideprevention/

Suicide Information & Education Center (SIEC)

www.siec.ca

Suicide Prevention Advocacy Network (SPAN)

www.spanusa.org