

The Hero in Each of Us: Finding Your Role in Suicide Prevention

Suicide Prevention Report to the Community
September 2021



Everyone in Los Angeles County can help prevent suicide. Steps you can take include knowing the warning signs for suicide, finding the words to reach out to someone you are concerned about, and reaching out to local resources for help and support.



Get Involved in Suicide Prevention: LASuicidePreventionNetwork.org
National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (Didi Hirsch) 24/7: 1.800.273.TALK (8255)

Suicide is a complex problem requiring collaborative solutions at multiple levels including individuals, families and communities. Suicide prevention can only be effective when everyone is part of the solution. From county leadership, business owners, educators, faith leaders, health care providers, mental health professionals, first responders, to all members of our community, everyone has a role to play. A comprehensive public health approach to suicide prevention emphasizes prevention, early intervention, and effective crisis response, and addresses health disparities and access.

Los Angeles County's Approach to Suicide Prevention:

- **Fosters prevention** and well-being through connections, education, outreach, and stigma reduction.
- **Promotes early help-seeking** where people know the warning signs and resources, and are confident to intervene or get help for themselves.
- Ensures a safe and compassionate response during and after a crisis **by focusing on stabilization and linkage to services** in the least restrictive setting.
- After a suicide attempt or death, individuals, families, schools and communities **have short- and long-term support.**

Find Your Role in Suicide Prevention

According to a study released in 2018 by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)¹, the problems most frequently associated with suicide are strained relationships, life stressors (often involving work or finances), substance use problems, physical health conditions, and recent or impending crisis. The most important takeaway is that suicide is an issue not only for those diagnosed with a mental illness, but for anyone struggling with serious life problems.

Just like CPR, everyone in Los Angeles County can take action to help those community members experiencing emotional pain and play a role in suicide prevention.

Know the Signs. Find the Words. Reach Out.

www.LASuicidePreventionNetwork.org

After a Suicide Loss

People who have lost someone to suicide often don't receive the same compassion from others that those who have lost a loved one another way experience. Some of this is because people are uncomfortable talking about suicide. Consider reaching out to someone who has lost a friend or loved one to suicide. Ask them about how the person they lost lived rather than focusing on the way they died. The more we talk about suicide and suicide prevention, the more we can reduce the stigma around the subject and infuse our communities with hope and healing.

Survivors After Suicide (SAS)

For more information, contact Didi Hirsch's Suicide Bereavement Services Program Director Rick Mogil at rmogil@didihirsch.org or call 424.362.2912 for adults and 424.362.2911 for teens.

Survivors of Suicide Attempts (SOSA)

For more information contact Patricia S. Speelman, MA, LMFT at pspeelman@didihirsch.org or 424.362.2901.

Healing Conversations: Personal Support for Survivors of Suicide Loss

For more information email healingconversations@afsp.org

Suicide Warning Signs

Pain isn't always obvious. Reach out to someone you are concerned about if you observe one or more of these warning signs, especially if the behavior is new, has increased, or seems related to a painful event, loss, or change:

- Talking about wanting to die or suicide
- Looking for a way to kill themselves
- Feeling hopeless, desperate, or trapped
- Giving away possessions
- Putting affairs in order
- Reckless behavior
- Uncontrolled anger
- Increased drug or alcohol use
- Withdrawal
- Anxiety or agitation
- Changes in sleep
- Sudden mood changes
- No sense of purpose

If you are concerned about someone, ask: **"Are you thinking about suicide?"**

You are not alone in helping someone in crisis. Crisis lines, counselors, intervention programs and more are available to you as well as to the person experiencing the emotional crisis. Crisis counselors can quickly assess the level of risk in a situation and connect you to appropriate services. You can find reassurance in the knowledge that most suicidal crises last for a brief period of time. Stay with the person and remove items that could be used in an attempt.

**National Suicide Prevention Lifeline
(Didi Hirsch) 24/7**

1.800.273.TALK (8255)

Para español, oprima el numero 2

Veterans: Press 1 or text 838255

For deaf and hard of hearing: 1.800.799.4889

Korean-speaking counselors are available during peak evening hours at 877.727.4747

**Crisis Text Line (24/7)
Text HOME to 741741**

Teen Line

Call **310.855.4673** (6 p.m. to 10 p.m. daily) or

text **TEEN to 839863** (6 p.m. to 9 p.m. daily)

**The Trevor Project for LGBTQ
Youth (24/7)**

Call **1.866.488.7386** or

text **START to 678678**

¹ CDC Vital Signs. Suicide rising across the US – More than a mental health concern. www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/suicide/index.html/

The Power of Words

Words to Consider...

RECOMMENDED terminology

- ✓ Died by suicide
- ✓ Took their own life
- ✓ Ended their life
- ✓ Attempted to end their life

NOT RECOMMENDED terminology

Committed suicide

Note: Use of the word “commit” implies a negative act such as a crime or sin.

Completed suicide

Note: This associates suicide with success.

Successful attempt or unsuccessful/failed attempt

Note: There is no success, or lack of success, when dealing with suicide.

When it comes to suicide prevention, the terms, phrases and words we use can have a significant impact on the way messages are received. Messages can encourage someone to seek help and reach out, or they can push people further from the support they need.

The suicide prevention community is trying to clarify the ways we all refer to actions related to suicide to better support help-seeking behavior among those that are at risk. For example, the most common term we use to describe someone ending their own life is that the individual “committed suicide.” Consider this: What first comes to mind when you hear the word “commit”? Crime? Sin? Those are the words that people typically think of when asked. Just the use of the word “commit” can carry an enormous amount of stigma and shame, preventing people from reaching out for the support they need. Instead, it is recommended to use “died by suicide.” This phrase can’t be distorted and simply states the fact without placing shame or guilt on the individual or survivors of suicide loss. Another phrase to consider is “successful” versus “unsuccessful” to describe suicide attempts. There is no success or failure when it comes to suicide. These events should simply be referred to as a suicide death or a suicide attempt. Please assist us in changing the conversations about suicide, and help us raise the bar for the conversations about suicide prevention. Each of us can play a part in promoting a more supportive environment, and it begins with the words we use.

Tips for Effective Messaging on Suicide Prevention

- ✓ Provide a suicide prevention resource.
- ✓ Educate the audience on warning signs.
- ✓ Avoid discussing details about the method of suicide.
- ✓ Explain complexity of suicide and avoid oversimplifying. It’s natural to want to answer the “why” involved in a suicide, but there is usually not one event that is “the cause” of a suicide attempt or death.
- ✓ Focus on prevention and hope by using images and words that show people being supported, not suffering alone.
- ✓ Avoid sensational language and statistics that make suicide seem common overall. Consider data that highlights help-seeking such as number of calls to the local crisis line.

Helpful Resources:

Reporting suicide for the news media www.ReportingOnSuicide.org

Framework for Successful Messaging, National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention

www.SuicidePreventionMessaging.org

Status of Suicide and Suicide Prevention in Los Angeles County

Suicide Prevention Week 2021 Report Card

This report card brings together the most recent data from multiple sources to present a profile of suicide and suicide prevention in Los Angeles County. Please note that this is only a snapshot of suicide prevention trainings, outreach and awareness activities that have and are taking place.

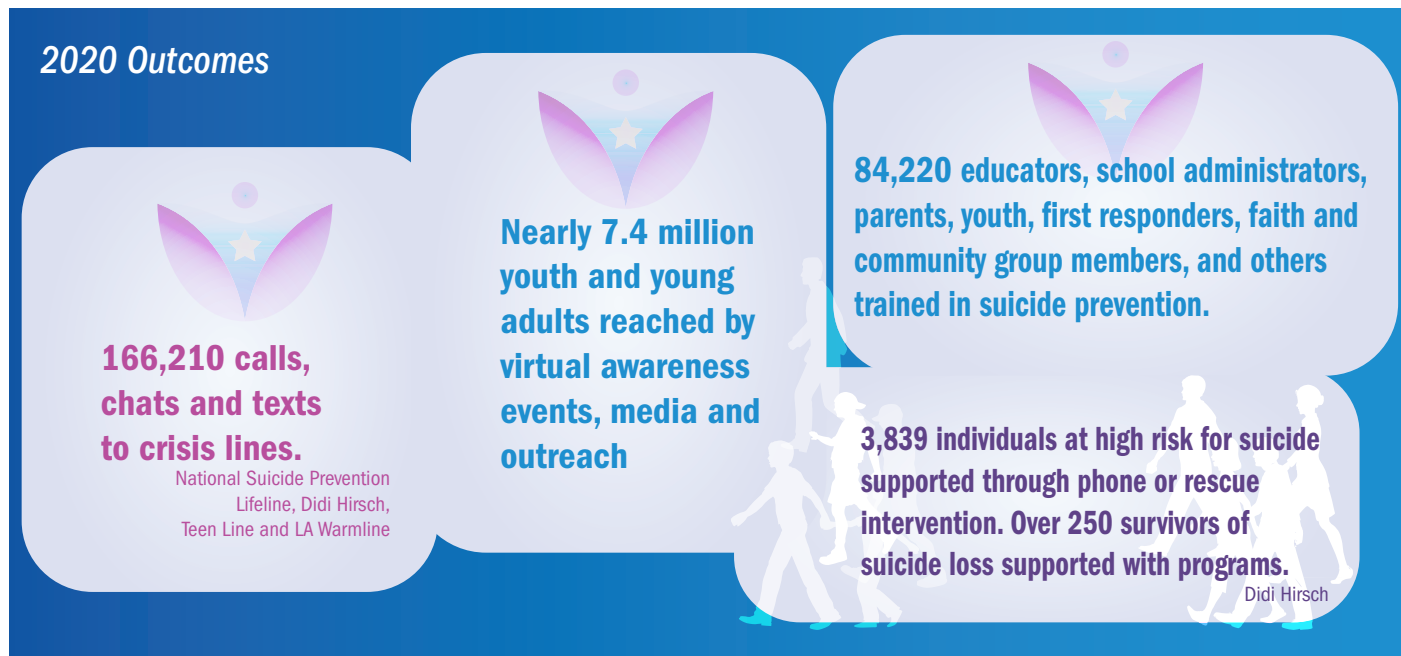
Indicator	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Total Suicide Deaths¹						
Number	818	823	843	891	947	865
Rate per 100,000 population	7.8	7.8	8	8.4	8.8	8.1
In 2019, the latest year for which suicide mortality data is available, 865 people died by suicide in Los Angeles County. Of these, 686 (13.3/100,000) were male and 428 (13.1/100,000) were white. Middle-aged and older adults show the highest numbers and rates for suicide death: 467 people that died were ages 45 and older, with the highest rate (12.8/100,000) for those aged 55-64 (n=156).	<p>When reporting on suicide, please include a suicide prevention resource:</p> <p>National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (Didi Hirsch) 24/7: 1.800.273.TALK (8255)</p>					
Treated and Released Emergency Department Visits for Suicide Attempts²						
Number	The number indicates number of people treated and released for a suicide attempt in the ER. In parenthesis is the rate/100,000 people. Data shown is for 2018.					
Rate per 100,000 population	2,696	2,527	2,511			
	26.2	24.6	24.8			
In 2018, the latest year for which suicide attempt data is available, 2,511 Angelenos were treated in the ER for a suicide attempt. Of these, 1,386 (28.1/100,000) were female. The rate was highest for African Americans (43.3/100,000), followed by white (30.8/100,000). Youth were at highest risk for being seen for a suicide attempt: 1,335 were under the age of 25, with the highest rate (84.0/100,000) for young people aged 15 to 19.	<p>Los Angeles County Service Provider Area</p> <p>The number indicates number of people treated and released for a suicide attempt in the ER. In parenthesis is the rate/100,000 people. Data shown is for 2018.</p>					
Admitted to Hospital for Suicide Attempt³						
Number			1,989	2,029	1,964	
Rate per 100,000 population			19.0	19.3	18.6	

¹Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics. Underlying Cause of Death 1999-2019 on CDC WONDER Online Database, released in 2020. Data are from the Multiple Cause of Death Files, 1999-2019, as compiled from data provided by the 57 vital statistics jurisdictions through the Vital Statistics Cooperative Program. Accessed at <http://wonder.cdc.gov/ucd-icd10.html> on Aug 12, 2021. Mortality data for 2020 have not been finalized, so 2019 is the most recent year of data presented. ²From Emergency Department Visit Data, Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development. ³Data from Hospital Discharge Data, Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development. A new coding system was implemented in hospitals and EDs starting in October 2015 and guidelines for identifying non-fatal suicide attempts also changed at that time. Because of these changes, data from 2016 onward should NOT be compared with earlier years of data.

Status of Suicide and Suicide Prevention in Los Angeles County

Suicide Prevention Week 2021 Report Card – continued

Suicide is a complex problem requiring collaborative solutions at multiple levels including individuals, families and communities. A comprehensive public health approach to suicide prevention emphasizes raising awareness of the warning signs and local resources, early intervention by training those in a position to intervene (gatekeepers), effective crisis response and help lines, and addresses health disparities and access.



This data is only a snapshot of suicide prevention trainings, outreach and awareness activities that have and are taking place in Los Angeles County.

Calls, chats and texts to crisis lines: Didi Hirsch and Teen Line 2020 Outcomes Report. The total for Didi Hirsch includes calls, chats and texts and roll-over calls from Teen Line, which are not counted in the Teen Line total. **Total number of suicide prevention trainings and presentations** offered by DMH PSP Team and trained community members, FY 20-21 Directing Change Program (AB2246 trainings for LA only as well as statewide parent trainings, Didi Hirsch 2020, AFSP 2020, Teen Line 2020, LACOE TEAL FY20-21. **Young adults reached by awareness events, media and outreach:** Directing Change Outcomes Report for Los Angeles County FY 20-21 (participants, mini grant events, judges), FY 20-21 WeRise social media and outreach campaign, 2020 AFSP virtual Out of the Darkness Experience, 2020 Didi Hirsch Virtual Event, 2020 Teen Line outreach programs. **High risk interventions and Survivor of Suicide Loss Support Groups** (2020 Didi Hirsch drop-in groups and 8-week program).

Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (LACDMH), Partners in Suicide Prevention Team (PSP)

This innovative program offered by the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (LACDMH) is designed to increase public awareness of suicide and reduce stigma associated with seeking mental health and substance abuse services. The team offers education, outreach, trainings, and crisis and stabilization support, identifies appropriate tools such as evidence-based practices, and provides linkage and referrals to age-appropriate services.

Fiscal Year 2020-2021 Outcomes

3,172 people were trained in suicide prevention as a result of 414 presentations held in English and Spanish by LACDMH

2,313 people trained in 101 suicide prevention trainings by PSP Team

7,381,154 people reached by WeRise virtual and socially distanced events and social media campaigns

Didi Hirsch Suicide Prevention Center (www.didihirsch.org)

Didi Hirsch Mental Health Services provides mental health, substance use and suicide prevention services at 10 centers and nearly 100 schools and community settings. Suicide prevention services including staffing of the 24/7 bilingual crisis line, crisis chat and text, bereavement survivor support groups, community education and outreach, attempt survivor support groups, school and first responder trainings, research, and crisis services as part of the Suicide Response Team.

2020 Outcomes

128,643 calls, chats and texts

3,839 high-risk callers/chatters rescued

47% of callers under age 25; age of youngest caller: 6; age of oldest caller

97,904 people participated in 2020 virtual event

161 people served in drop-in groups, 108 people served in 8-week Survivors After Suicide program

5,767 people trained in 183 suicide prevention trainings

20,213 calls received by LA Warmline

Status of Suicide and Suicide Prevention in Los Angeles County

Suicide Prevention Week 2021 Report Card – continued

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (www.afsp.org)

The Los Angeles Chapter of the American Foundation of Suicide Prevention provides education, outreach and trainings in schools, health care settings and communities.

FY 2020-2021

14,000 community members trained in suicide prevention during 400 virtual presentations.
1,300 participants in virtual SoCal Out of the Darkness Experience

Teen Line (www.teenline.org)

Teen Line is an anonymous hotline for teenagers that operates every evening from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. PST. Teen Line volunteers who answer the calls, emails and texts are Los Angeles teenagers who have received specialized training. In addition to operating the crisis line, Teen Line supports teens through online message boards, outreach, education and professional trainings.

2020 Outcomes

17,354 calls, emails and texts with 980 suicidal teens helped on the hotline
24,378 parents, school, staff, youth organization staff and law enforcement officers trained in suicide prevention
5,336 youth participated in outreach programs

Directing Change Program (www.DirectingChangeCA.org)

The Directing Change Program educates youth ages 12–25 about the warning signs of suicide, mental health, and how to help themselves or a friend with an initiative that engages them in the creation of short films on these topics. Additional services by Directing Change include outreach, parent engagement, and trainings for educators and districts focusing on implementing comprehensive school-based suicide prevention policies

FY 2017–2018 Outcomes

42,589 youth, parents, and community members reached through program, mini grants, and events
332 films about suicide prevention and mental health created by Los Angeles County youth
211 school administrators from 56 Los Angeles County schools/districts trained virtually on implementing suicide prevention policies

In **2018, 29** children and adolescents (**11-17** years old) died by suicide in Los Angeles County. Of these, **74%** were male, **26%** were female and **37.5%** were ages **16-17** years. The youngest age of a child was **11** years.

(Child Death Review Team Report 2019)

Between **2016** and **2018**, **351** youth and young adults (10-24 years old) in Los Angeles County died by suicide, the majority were male.

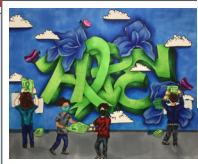
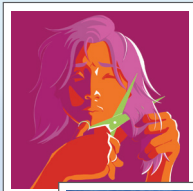
1,869 youth and young adults (10-24 years old) were hospitalized for a suicide attempt in Los Angeles County. The majority were female.

3,903 youth and young adults (10–24 years old) were treated in the ER for a suicide attempt.

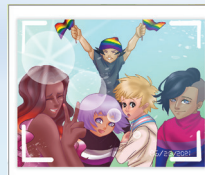
(Los Angeles County Department of Public Health: Preventing Youth Suicide, September 2021 Brief (In Press))

Approximately **15%** of **9th** and **11th** graders have seriously considered suicide.

(Los Angeles Suicide Ideation County average: 2015–2017 Source: CalSCHLS <http://calschls.org>)



When It All Seems Hopeless



In 2020, Directing Change launched a new category titled Hope and Justice that asked youth to create art pieces in any medium about either what brings them hope, a social justice topic they feel passionate about, or a rotating monthly submission topic around the social distancing, election, self-love, representation, substance use, mental health and other topics.

- 164 art pieces by 175 Los Angeles County youth in the 2020-2021 program year.

“Not only is it a great program for our students who needed so much extra support this year, but it is a great advantage to the staff, as it keeps our attention on mental health, and a wonderful vehicle through which to address it. I have never seen such open discussion as I did this year about the students discussing why they made their own film and student response to it. This is a vital program for so many. Directing Change indeed directs change and results in a positive change in areas of mental health, technical abilities, self-awareness and growth mindset for all involved.”

– LA County, English teacher at John R. Wooden High School

Los Angeles County Office of Education (<https://www.lacoe.edu>)

The Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE) and the Center for Distance and Online Learning (CDOL) in the Division of Curriculum and Instructional Services (CIS) continued to support the mental health needs to our school districts, charter schools, and private schools through the Suicide Prevention Ongoing Resiliency Training (SPORT) project. Many school districts, charter school networks, and private schools depend on the SPORT project for continued guidance and support in complying with the mandates of AB2246 and AB 1767. For the 2020-21 school year, CDOL focused SPORT training and implementation for districts that were identified for support under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). Additionally, CDOL offers Technology Enhanced Arts Learning (TEAL), which focuses on arts integration, social-emotional learning and trauma-informed practices to build capacity in arts education, utilizing the same successful blended learning format.

2020-2021 SPORT Outcomes (<https://preventsuicide.lacoe.edu/>):


- 1-Day Virtual Conference provided suicide prevention, intervention, postvention, and student resiliency content to teachers, school administrators, and school-based mental health support staff.
- 33 LEAs including school districts, charter schools, CDE Suicide Prevention Team Leads, and San Bernardino Superintendent of Schools COE Mental Health Team received professional development and support.
- 28 customized coaching sessions were provided designed to support suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention needs of the participating school districts
- Provided Student Mental Wellbeing (SMWB) asynchronous online training modules

2020-2021 TEAL Outcomes (<https://tealarts.lacoe.edu/>):

- Two 2-Day Foundational Virtual Conferences reached 225 participants from 36 districts representing 89 schools within LA County
- Transformative Virtual Conference serviced at 21 districts/charter networks and 37 schools
- Provided access to TEAL Online Learning Modules and Compassionate Care Packages to increase equitable capacity in the areas of culturally inclusive and diverse arts integration embedded with social emotional learning competencies.

After a rigorous screening process, the LASPN created a Youth Advisory Board comprised of 23 teenagers and young adults from across greater Los Angeles. The group participates in monthly trainings by community partners about various mental health issues, to help build their knowledge and advocacy as mental health ambassadors in their communities. They are currently planning projects for 2022 related to mental health in the areas of art and film, outreach and education, and advocacy.

Each year, the Network and its members work to coordinate the Los Angeles County Suicide Prevention Summit, which occurs annually in September. Each year a different perspective, best practice and population is highlighted to help attendees better understand the role they can play in suicide prevention.



2021 LASPN
Virtual Suicide Prevention Summit
**re-envisioning
the journey together**

Conference:

September 14 and 15, 2021

Post-Conference Trainings:

- **September 17, 2021**
- **September 24, 2021**

For information visit:

www.LASuicidePreventionNetwork.org





Get Involved with the Los Angeles County Suicide Prevention Network (LASPN) LASuicidePreventionNetwork.org

The Los Angeles County Suicide Prevention Network (LASPN) is a group of mental health professionals, advocates, survivors, providers, researchers and representatives from various agencies and organizations working together to decrease the number of suicides in Los Angeles County. Its mission is to promote public and professional awareness, education, training and engagement regarding suicide and suicide prevention, intervention and postvention in Los Angeles County. Through the collaboration of its diverse members, the LASPN is working to leverage the talent and resources available locally to work toward comprehensive suicide prevention.






Key activities

- Create a county-wide strategic plan on suicide prevention.
- Plan annual Suicide Prevention Summit.
- Implement and coordinate suicide prevention planning and activities across different sectors, populations and systems.
- Create and manage website to centralize Los Angeles County suicide prevention activities.



Raise Awareness About Suicide Prevention at Work, at School, or in Your Community

-  Learn the warning signs and risk factors for suicide
-  Share materials containing information about warning signs and resources
-  Host a training on suicide prevention and/or best practices for suicide risk assessment
-  Learn about safe and effective messaging for suicide

Reduce Access to Lethal Means

-  Ask your local pharmacy to include crisis resources on pharmacy bags
-  Safely dispose of unused or unneeded medications
-  Safely store all firearms (gun locks/safes)
-  Secure firearms outside of homes for people in distress
-  Support local efforts to implement bridge barriers

Prepare Your School or Community for How to Respond After a Suicide

-  Help develop a postvention plan at your school or organization
-  Share local resources for loss and attempt survivors

Join the Los Angeles County Suicide Prevention Network

For more information and to get started visit:

www.LASuicidePreventionNetwork.org

To learn more about how to get involved, visit: LASuicidePreventionNetwork.org

If you are in crisis, please contact the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (Didi Hirsch) 24/7: **1.800.273.TALK (8255)**