

Suicide in Women

- Women have higher rates of suicidal behaviour compared to men (ideation, planning and suicide attempts) compared to men, however men are more likely to die by suicide.
- In 2013, 637 women died by suicide in Australia, a rate of 5.5 per 100,000.
- Suicide is a disproportionate cause of death among younger women. The proportion of 15-19 and 20-24 year old female suicides (25%) compared to older women (less than 5%).
- Hanging is the most commonly used method of suicide for women with poisoning by drugs.
- Women are more highly represented in non-fatal suicidal behaviours but are far less visible in suicide prevention programs and research.
- There were an estimated 804,000 suicide deaths worldwide in 2012, which equates to a global suicide rate of 11.4 per 100,000 population (8.0 for women and 15.0 for men).
- Non-suicidal self-injury is prevalent amongst women and can be extremely distressing and complex. The rate for women hospitalised as a result of intentional self-harm were at least 40% higher than men's rates over the period from 1999-00 to 2011-12.

Risk Factors –

- Women with a history of mental illness diagnoses have a greater risk of suicidal behaviour.
- Depression is a major issue for a significant number of middle-aged and older women – this age group of women also have a higher rate and number of suicides than woman of all other ages
- One in 10 women develop depression during pregnancy and 1 in 7 develop postnatal depression; roughly 30% of pregnant women with depression experience suicidal ideation.
- Alcohol was detected in nearly 28% of women who suicided.
- Life experiences such as relationship turmoil, domestic violence, childhood sexual abuse, exposure to poor parenting, financial stress and unemployment.
- Bullying and peer victimisation puts adolescents at increased risk of suicidal ideation and behaviour.

Population Groups at Increased Risk –

- In a nation survey 38% of same-gender attracted women aged 22-27 years had experiences depression compared to 19% of heterosexual women respondents.
- The relationship between bullying and suicide risk was stronger for lesbian and bisexual youth than for heterosexual youth.
- ABS data for 2013 showed the suicide rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women has increased to 12.9 per 1000,000 compared with 5.4 for non-Indigenous women.
- Suicide rates (per 100,000) in 2013 for young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women aged 15-24 years was 22.7 compared to 5.0 for non-Indigenous women.
- Evidence shows us that of all the relations to the deceased, partners and mothers of people who die by suicide are the groups most at increased risk of suicide.

Table 1: Prevalence, 12-month suicidality by gender, Australia, 2007 & 2013 suicides

	Women %	Women No.	Men %	Men No.	All Persons %	All Persons No
Suicidal ideation	2.7	221,300	1.9	146,700	2.3	370,000
Suicide plans	0.7	57,500	0.4	33,500	0.6	91,000
Suicide attempts	0.5	42,700	0.3	22,600	0.4	65,000
Any suicidality	2.8	N/A	1.9	N/A	2.4	380,000
Suicides (ABS 2013 data)	25	637	75	1,885	100	2,522

I Note: Any suicidality is lower than the sum as people may have reported more than one type of suicidality.

II Note: Using most recently available suicide data 2013

“One of the secrets of life is to make stepping stones out of stumbling blocks.” – Jack Penn

“You have not lived today until you have done something for someone who can never repay you.” – John Bunyan