

## **Suicide: Why?**

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On August 11, 2014, Robin Williams lost his long battle with depression and committed suicide. His death was the topic of discussion for days in the media, the home, at work, in our personal contemplation, and wherever people gathered. Williams belonged to the group of older white men whose suicide rate has increased almost 40% from 1999 to 2010, and is the highest demographic population for suicide – white, male and over 45. William's suicide was a reality blow to the nation and world, yes this does happen and to strong men.

The most overwhelming emotion an individual feels when contemplating suicide is hopelessness. There is a pervasive feeling that the psychological pain they are experiencing will never improve. Typically there is a disdain for the self and sense that nothing can be done to alter the situation that feels so desperate. Suicide is a thief, a seductive thief. It promises peace and absolving of pain and suffering preying upon the individual when they are asleep at the helm of personal fortitude and strength. Reaching out is difficult due to shame. Letting others discover how one feels is too threatening, so most suffer in silence. They hope no one will discover the depth of disgust they carry, the black hole they try to ignore and suppress lest it grow in strength. These people are the invisible sufferers, and then someone like Williams, a guy everyone loves, commits suicide, the ugly truth of suicide gets forefront

attention, at least for a while. William's suicide forcefully reminded us we know someone right now who is suffering. Be good to your neighbor, your loved one, your family, your coworker, for you never know if they are among those who suffer in silence.

The demographics of suicide look like this:

- Over 30,000 Americans commit suicide each year.
- Substance abuse is a risk factor.
- About 2/3 of people who complete suicide are depressed at the time of their deaths.
- Depression that is untreated, undiagnosed, or ineffectively treated is the number one cause of suicide.
- Military service, being male and American Indian increases risk.
- Males complete greater than 75% of suicides.

Some warning signs of suicide:

- Talking about wanting to die
- Searching for methods
- Hopelessness
- Increase use of alcohol or drugs
- Feelings of being a burden
- Loss of interest
- Telling people goodbye
- Giving away personal possessions
- Isolation

If you see warning signs:

- Ask questions.
- Do not keep a plan a secret regardless of risking a confidence or promise.
- Do not minimize or shame another's feelings or thoughts about suicide.
- If you feel like the person is not in immediate danger then offer to seek help with them.

Always take suicidal thoughts or plans seriously and see a physician or mental health professional as soon as possible. If immediate help is needed, call 911, go to the nearest emergency room, or call 232-HELP.

<http://www.afsp.org/>

[http://www.helpguide.org/mental/suicide\\_prevention.htm](http://www.helpguide.org/mental/suicide_prevention.htm)

<http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>