

# Once-Suicidal Evangelist: 'We Have an Epidemic on the Rise'

September is National Suicide Prevention Month, and Jay Lowder, international evangelist and founder of Jay Lowder Harvest Ministries, wants to share his story in hopes that it may help prevent another from ending his or her own life.

The past year has been marked by a number of high-profile suicides, including the deaths of Chef Anthony Bourdain, Designer Kate Spade and Musician Avicii. Suicide is a leading cause of death in the U.S., according to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), and on the rise. The CDC found suicides increased by more than 30 percent from 1999 to 2016.

"While I'm grateful for the emphasis on suicide prevention in September, this is a topic that needs to be addressed every day," said Lowder, who is author of *Midnight in Aisle 7*. "We have an epidemic on the rise. Self-violence is without prejudice and affects people from every race, ethnicity, economic status and gender. No one is immune, and until we get serious about creating an open environment of discussion, we will continue to see people fall victim."

Lowder understands all too well the desire to commit suicide, and the warning signs that precede such actions. At the age of 21, he was an alcoholic, unable to cope with the difficulties life had thrown at him. Feeling helpless, he held a loaded pistol to his temple prepared to pull the trigger. Thankfully, Lowder was saved by an unexpected yet timely visit from his roommate.

This event set Lowder on a path that led him to individuals who helped him find hope through faith. Today, he is a full-time evangelist who uses his experience to help others,. He offers practical resources via his ministry website for

parents, churches and leaders to combat rising suicide rates, including a television show called *The Darkest Hour*, an educational infographic, informative podcast episodes and a white paper specific to leaders with helpful suggestions for setting up ministry resources for those who are hurting.

“Recognizing the warning signs of a person who is in potential danger is the first step to helping before it is too late,” said Lowder. “If we encourage open discussion regarding this sensitive topic and pay attention to the indicators that often foreshadow suicide, perhaps we can, together, lower the statistics and save lives.”

For more information, visit [{eoa}](#)

**About Jay Lowder:** *Jay Lowder is the founder of Jay Lowder Harvest Ministries, an organization that exists to bring hope to individuals while inspiring others to do the same. In addition to speaking at churches, schools and community events, Lowder is also the author of Midnight in Aisle 7 and producer of the television show, The Darkest Hour. For additional information, visit .*