

Suicide Rate in U.S. Is Highest It's Been in 50 Years; Many Concerned It Will Rise Further

If you or someone you know is struggling with suicidal thoughts, please reach out to the National Suicide Hotline: 800-273-8255.

Despite the fact that more money is being spent on suicide prevention efforts than ever before in our history, the suicide rate in the United States continues to rise dramatically. As you will see below, one new study has discovered that our suicide rate actually increased by 41% between 1999 and 2016. Even though we have the highest standard of living any generation of Americans has ever enjoyed, we are an exceedingly unhappy nation and we are killing ourselves in unprecedented numbers. This shouldn't be happening, but unfortunately the forces that have taken over our culture have convinced multitudes of Americans that their lives are not worth living any longer. In a culture where truth has been abandoned, it is easy for lies to run rampant, and it takes a great deal of deception to get someone to willingly choose to embrace suicide. No matter what you are going through right now, there is always a way to turn things around, and we all have been given lives worth living.

Sadly, the suicide rate in this country has continued to escalate year after year. According to *The Los Angeles Times*, 2017 is "the latest year for which reliable statistics are available," and in that year the U.S. suicide rate hit a 50-year high:

Whether they are densely populated or deeply rural, few

communities in the United States have escaped a shocking increase in suicides over the last two decades. From 1999 to 2016, suicide claimed the lives of 453,577 adults between the ages of 25 and 64—enough to fill more than 1,000 jumbo jets.

Suicides reached a 50-year peak in 2017, the latest year for which reliable statistics are available.

These numbers come from a new study that was just released, and it claims that our suicide rate actually increased by 41% between 1999 and 2016:

The researchers evaluated national suicide data collected between 1999 and 2016, then created a county-by-county estimation of suicide rates among all adults between the ages of 25-64. In that time period, suicide rates rose an astonishing 41%; from a median of 15 suicides per 100,000 county residents in 1999 to 21.2 in the last three years of analysis.

And suicide is a rapidly growing problem among our teens and young adults as well.

In fact, suicide is now the second leading cause of death for Americans from age 10 to age 24.

Everyone goes through very low times, and for many people it can seem like those low times will never end. But when I was at my lowest points many years ago, I always had faith that better days were coming, even though at the time I couldn't even imagine the absolutely amazing things that were ahead for me. The point that I am trying to make is that we simply do not know what the future will hold. No matter how dark things may seem to you right now, a miracle could literally be right around the corner.

This new study that just came out also discovered that suicide rates are significantly higher in rural parts of the country:

It was noted that suicide rates were at their highest in less-populous counties and in areas where people have lower incomes and diminished access to resources. For example, between 2014 and 2016, there were 17.6 suicides per 100,000 people in large metropolitan counties, noticeably lower than the 22 suicides per 100,000 people recorded in rural counties.

The quality of life in rural areas is so much nicer in so many ways, but there is also a lot of isolation and poverty. Humans are meant to be social creatures, and when there aren't a lot of people around, that can feed feelings of depression. And if someone is deeply struggling with poverty, it can be difficult to see a way out in an area with few economic opportunities. According to Brookings Institution research analyst Carol Graham, many Americans living in such areas "see no optimism for the future":

"These are the places that used to be thriving rural places, near enough to cities and manufacturing hubs," she said. "They're places that accord with a stereotypical picture of stable blue-collar existence—and a quite nice existence—for whites in the heartland."

With the collapse of extractive industries such as coal mining, the departure of manufacturing jobs, and a strapped agricultural economy, "these communities just got flipped on their head," Graham observed. "And the people in those places became unhinged. You'd have a sense of places where everything has left. And among those who stay, you see no optimism for the future."

If this is happening now, while economic conditions are still relatively stable, what is going to happen to the suicide rate during the next major U.S. economic downturn?

There is never, ever, ever a good reason for someone to commit

suicide, but unfortunately during the next recession we are likely to see the suicide rate rise substantially higher.

Another factor that is resulting in a higher rate of suicide in rural areas is a lack of health insurance:

Last but certainly not least, a lack of health insurance coverage is significantly associated with rising suicide rates in rural US counties.

Specifically, the researchers observed that the more people in a county who didn't have health insurance coverage, the higher that county's suicide rate was.

When you are buried in medical bills that you know you will never be able to pay, it can be exceedingly difficult to envision brighter days ahead. Our health care system is deeply, deeply broken, and this is something that I wrote about on Tuesday.

It is such a tragedy when people choose to end their lives because of financial circumstances, because financial circumstances are always temporary.

No matter how bad things are in your life right now, there is always a way to turn them around. The best days of your life could still be ahead for you, but you have got to be willing to believe that this is true.

Life is an absolutely incredible gift, and don't let anyone ever convince you that you should end it.

It has been said that life is like a coin. You can spend it any way that you want, but you can only spend it once. I would encourage you to spend it loving others greatly, enjoying each day to the fullest and doing something that truly matters.
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