

*Myth: "People who attempt suicide once won't ever try it again."*

**Fact:** Out of every five people who complete suicide, four have made previous attempts.

*Myth: "Asking a person if he/she is thinking about committing suicide will plant the idea or encourage a person to attempt it."*

**Fact:** Supporting a suicidal person to talk about feelings of alienation, worthlessness and pain may help diffuse suicidal feelings and can therefore be preventive.

*Myth: "Most people who kill themselves really want to die."*

**Fact:** In fact, most people who kill themselves are ambivalent about whether they want to live or die. What they really want is an end to their pain and suffering.

*Myth: "When people become suicidal, they will always be suicidal."*

**Fact:** Most people are suicidal for a limited period of time. However, suicidal feelings can recur.

*Myth: When people who are suicidal feel better, they are no longer suicidal.*

**Fact:** Sometimes suicidal people feel better because they have decided to die by suicide, and may feel a sense of relief that the pain will soon be over.

*Myth: "There is little correlation between alcohol or drug abuse and suicide."*

**Fact:** Oftentimes people who die by suicide are under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

*Myth: "An unsuccessful attempt means that the person wasn't serious about ending their life."*

**Fact:** The attempt in and of itself is the most important factor; not the effectiveness of the method.

*Myth: "People who complete suicide always leave notes."*

**Fact:** Most people don't leave notes.

**The content of this brochure is for informational purposes only and not intended to function as an assessment tool or an intervention.**

# Suicide:

## Myths

## and

## Facts

St. Thomas Aquinas College

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**Information obtained from:**

[www.suicide.org](http://www.suicide.org)

[www.crisislink.org](http://www.crisislink.org)

## Myths and Facts About Suicide

*Myth: "Young people don't kill themselves."*

**Fact:** Suicide is the number 2 cause of death for young people aged 15-24.

*Myth: "People who talk about suicide don't kill themselves."*

**Fact:** Eight out of ten people who commit suicide tell someone that they are thinking about hurting themselves before they actually do.

*Myth: "People who talk about suicide are just trying to get attention."*

**Fact:** No. Few people commit suicide without first letting someone else know how they feel. Those who are considering suicide give clues and warnings as a cry for help. In fact, most seek out someone to rescue them. Over 70% who do threaten to carry out a suicide either make an attempt or complete the act.

*Myth: "Suicide always occurs without any warning signs."*

**Fact:** There are almost always warning signs.

*Myth: "Once the emotional state improves, the risk of suicide is over."*

**Fact:** The highest rates of suicide occur within about three months of an apparent improvement in a severely depressed state. Therefore, an improvement in emotional state doesn't mean a lessened risk.

*Myth: "Improvement in a suicidal person means the danger is over."*

**Fact:** Many suicides occur several months after the beginning of improvement, when a person has energy to act on suicidal thoughts.

*Myth: "After a person has attempted suicide, it is unlikely he/she will try again."*

**Fact:** People who have attempted suicide are very likely to try again. 80% of the people who die from suicide have made at least one previous attempt.

*Myth: "Once people decide to die by suicide, there is nothing you can do to stop them."*

**Fact:** Suicide can be prevented. Most people who are suicidal do not want to die; they just want to stop their pain.

*Myth: "Suicide only strikes people of a certain gender, race, financial status, age, etc."*

**Fact:** Suicide can strike anyone.

*Myth: "People who attempt suicide are crazy."*

**Fact:** No. They are in pain and may suffer from a mental illness. Anyone could attempt suicide.

*Myth: "People who talk about suicide are trying to manipulate others."*

**Fact:** No. People who talk about suicide are in pain and need help. And telling them that they "just want something" or "are trying to manipulate" is both insensitive and ignorant. People often talk about suicide before dying by suicide. Always take talk about suicide seriously.