

WOMEN & SUICIDE

A woman takes her own life every 90 minutes in the U.S., but it is estimated that one woman attempts suicide every 78 seconds.

- Women attempt suicide twice as much as men.
- The higher rate of attempted suicide in women is attributed to the elevated rate of mood disorders among females, such as major depression, dysthymia and seasonal affective disorder.
- In the U.S. in 1998, the suicide rate among women was 4.4 per 100,000, while for men it was 18.6 per 100,000.
- Although women attempt suicide more often, men complete suicide at a rate four times that of women.
- More women than men report a history of attempted suicide, with a gender ratio of 2:1.
- Firearms are now the leading method of suicide in women, as well as men.
- Suicide is more common among women who are single, recently separated, divorced, or widowed.
- The precipitating life events for women who attempt suicide tend to be interpersonal losses or crises in significant social or family relationships.
- Many women who suffer from manic depressive illness experience their first episode in the postpartum period.
- Sixty to eighty percent of women experience transient depression, and ten to fifteen percent of women develop clinical depression during the postpartum period.
- The suicide rates for women peak between the ages of 45-54 years old, and again after age 75.
- Women are more likely than men to have stronger social supports, to feel that their relationships are deterrents to suicide, and to seek psychiatric and medical intervention, which may contribute to their lower rate of completed suicide.

Although many effective treatments exist, suicide in women remains a much underrecognized, underdiagnosed, and undertreated problem.