Suicidal Ideation in North Carolina

Suicide is a serious public health problem that affects individuals, families, and communities across North Carolina. However, it is important to recognize that suicides can be reduced with effective prevention strategies and support systems. Suicidal ideation refers to the presence of persistent and recurring thoughts of wanting to end one’s own life. In some incidents, suicidal ideation may include specific plans for carrying out suicide. Self-inflicted injury includes all injuries due to self-directed violence, including suicide attempts as well as self-harm events where someone may not have intended to end their life.

54,770 Suicidal ideation-related ED visits in 2022
14,154 Self-inflicted injury-related ED visits in 2022

Report is based on initial encounter ICD-10-CM suicidal ideation and self-inflicted injury codes. The suicidal ideation indicator consists of the R45.851 ICD-10-CM code. See the CSTE Self-Harm Indicator for a comprehensive list of codes.

Note: Report is restricted to NC residents ages 10 and older and does not exclude visits resulting in death.

Data Source: NC DETECT, ED visits; data as of 6/1/2023.

Suicidal Ideation and Self-Inflicted Injury ED Visits 2020-2022

54% of suicidal ideation-related visits are by males and over 60% of self-inflicted injury-related visits are by females.

Suicidal ideation ED Visit Rates by County of Residence: Jan-Dec 2022

6 of the 10 Highest Counties Experiencing a High Burden of ED Visits for Suicidal Ideation were Rural.*

Examining the Overlap

In 2022, about 40% of the emergency department visits with a self-inflicted injury code also contained a code for suicidal ideation.

*Urban/rural classifications based on classifications from the US Census. Crude rates are calculated by dividing the ED visit count by the county population and multiplying by 100. Please note that crude rates are calculated using the most recent 12 months of data and 2020 population estimates.
Recognizing the Signs*

Talking about wanting to die or to kill oneself.

Expressing feelings of hopelessness, worthlessness, or helplessness.

Withdrawing from friends and family, and losing interest in activities once enjoyed.

Expressing feelings of being trapped or in unbearable pain.

Increasing the use of drugs or alcohol.

Engaging in risky behaviors, such as driving recklessly or participating in high-risk activities.

Resources

988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline: 988 (call or text)
24/7 service via a toll-free hotline that connects you to the closest crisis center. Workers will provide support, actively listen, and connect callers to resources.

The Trevor Project: 866-488-7386
24/7 crisis counseling for LGBTQ youth.

Veterans Crisis Line: 1-800-273-8255
24/7 crisis line for veterans and their loved ones.

NC Injury and Violence Prevention Branch's Suicide Prevention Website:
https://injuryfreenc.dph.ncdhhs.gov/prevention/Resources/Suicide.htm

*It is important to acknowledge that some cases of suicide can occur without any of the aforementioned warning signs. Furthermore, there are instances where individuals may display these signs without harboring any intent of a suicide attempt.