



BTAC BULLETIN

BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE | LAW ENFORCEMENT & COUNTERINTELLIGENCE | CYBERSECURITY | EMPLOYEE MANAGEMENT RELATIONS | THREAT ASSESSMENT & MANAGEMENT

SUICIDALITY

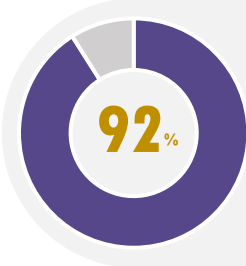
& INSIDER RISK

Suicidality is the risk of suicide, which can be indicated by suicidal thoughts, plans, gestures, or attempts. Suicidality extends beyond being an issue of personal wellbeing, as it can profoundly impact not only the person suffering, but also their family, friends, and community. Research indicates it can also pose a direct threat to organizations by increasing risk for targeted violence and other threats. For example, suicidality has been often identified in individuals who commit espionage^{1,2}. People struggling with suicidal ideation can have overwhelming thoughts and feelings that interfere with decision making and make them more vulnerable to behaviors that increase risk. Anyone who is believed to be a threat to him or herself should receive leadership support to the maximum extent possible and be referred to the insider risk/threat program for further evaluation and analysis by a multidisciplinary team. Together, we can prevent suicide.

LEADERSHIP ACTIONS TO REDUCE RISK

- ☐ **Identify the warning signs.**
Pay close attention when someone talks or writes about death or suicidal thoughts, especially if they have any of the risk factors described below.
- ☐ **Create protective environments.**
Establish inclusive, fair, and respectful environments. Positive, supportive environments protect individuals and help to mitigate risk.
- ☐ **Temporarily remove items the person might use to self-harm.**
In a crisis, temporarily removing access to lethal means is the most effective strategy to prevent suicide.
- ☐ **Send a referral to your multidisciplinary team (MDT).**
Your team can provide guidance and recommended resources.
- ☐ **Talk about suicide prevention.**
Open, honest conversations help to reduce suicide risk.
- ☐ **Promote connection through shared activities.**
Feelings of connection and belonging reduce suicide risk.
- ☐ **Support suicide loss survivors.**
Whether military or civilian, the Postvention Toolkit for a Military Suicide Loss, is helpful and available at www.dspo.mil.
- ☐ **Provide referrals to support services**
Military OneSource, 988 crisis line, religious supports, MTF and VA mental health clinics, and Employee Assistance Programs can help.

SUICIDAL BEHAVIOR & TARGETED VIOLENCE



A 2024 study of mass shootings in the U.S. by the FBI and North Carolina SBI found that **92% of active shooters** and 75% of disrupted persons of concern had current or historical suicidality³. More than 40% of the active shooters in this study died by suicide during the attack.

While there is no national tracking system for murder-suicides in the U.S., studies suggest that about 1,200 Americans die in murder-suicides each year⁴.



~1200
Deaths By
Murder-Suicide

COMMON RISK FACTORS FOR SUICIDE

INDIVIDUAL

- History of depression/other mental health issues
- Serious illness and/or chronic pain
- Criminal/Legal problems
- Job/Financial problems
- Substance use/abuse behavior
- Impulsiveness, Aggressiveness, Hopelessness
- History of violence victimization or perpetration

RELATIONSHIP

- Experiencing bullying
- Relationship loss
- Social isolation behavior
- High conflict or violent relationships
- Suicide of a loved one

COMMUNITY

- Community violence
- Easy lethal means access
- Social stigma associated with help-seeking
- Discrimination
- Suicides in community (cluster/contagion)

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**SUICIDE
PREVENTION
=
THREAT
MITIGATION**

988 SUICIDE & CRISIS
LIFELINE
24/7 Call-Text-Chat



DITMAC

DOD Insider Threat
Management and
Analysis Center

1. Wilder, U. M. (2017). The psychology of espionage. *Studies in Intelligence*, 61(2), 19-36. 2. Herbig, K. L. (2017). The expanding spectrum of espionage by Americans, 1947-2015. Defense Personnel and Security Research Center, Technical Report 17-10. 3. Williams, M. M., Jones, N. T., Cilke, T. R. R., Gibson, K. A., Gray, A. E., & O'Shea, C. L. (2024). Assessing the reliability and validity of the North Carolina BeTA Investigation Overview-25 (NCBIO-25) in a sample of active shooters and persons of concern. *Journal of Threat Assessment and Management*, Advance online publication. 4. Violence Policy Center (2023). *American Roulette: Murder-Suicide in the United States* (Washington, DC: Violence Policy Center).