Suicide in New Mexico

How many people in New Mexico died by suicide in 2018?

◊ 535 New Mexicans died by suicide for an age-adjusted rate of 24.8 deaths/100,000 residents.

◊ Suicide was the 8th leading cause of death among New Mexico residents. Among those 15-17 years, suicide was the leading cause of death by age group, tied with unintentional injuries. Among those 5-14 and 18-34 years, suicide was the second leading cause of death by age group, and among those 35-44 years, it was the third leading cause.

◊ New Mexico had the second highest suicide rate in the U.S. in 2018

What is the trend in suicide rates over the past decade?

◊ Suicide rates have been increasing in New Mexico and the U.S. over the past decade.

◊ New Mexico’s rate has consistently been more than 50% higher than the U.S. rate

◊ New Mexico suicide rates increased by 37% from 2009-2018.

◊ Rates among Whites increased 38.2%; rates among American Indians increased 55.4% and more than doubled over the past 5 years

◊ Rates among those aged 10-14 tripled, with most of the increase occurring from 2016-2018; rates among those aged 65-74 doubled

Who dies by suicide in New Mexico?

◊ In 2018, American Indians and Whites had the highest rates of suicide — 31.7 and 30.4 deaths per 100,000 persons, respectively.

◊ For American Indians, the rate was highest among those younger, especially 25-34 years

◊ For Whites, the rate was highest among those older, especially 45-54 and 65-74 years

◊ The suicide rate for males was more than three times that for females.

◊ Among age groups, the rate was highest among males 20-24 years and females 25-34 years.

◊ Rates among residents 10-14 years showed a 70% increase from 2017-2018, while those 15-19 and 85+ years showed large decreases

◊ 52% of those who died by suicide in 2018 used a firearm.

◊ The male firearm suicide rate was more than six times that of females

◊ Suicide rates by firearm and suffocation have increased by 40% and 58%, respectively, over the past decade
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Why is suicide a public health issue?

◊ Suicide is associated with having a mental illness and/or substance use diagnosis, psychosocial trauma or conflict, recent loss, family history of suicide and personal history of suicide attempt.

◊ Most suicides have multiple precipitating conditions such as depression, intimate partner problems, physical health conditions, financial challenges and legal problems.

◊ Comprehensive strategies incorporating all levels of government, healthcare providers, schools, community-based organizations, and community members can prevent suicides.

Warning Signs of suicide include:

⇒ Talking about wanting to die
⇒ Looking for a way to kill oneself
⇒ Talking about feeling hopeless or having no purpose
⇒ Talking about feeling trapped or in unbearable pain
⇒ Talking about being a burden to others
⇒ Increasing the use of alcohol or drugs
⇒ Acting anxious, agitated or recklessly
⇒ Sleeping too little or too much
⇒ Withdrawing or feeling isolated
⇒ Showing rage or talking about seeking revenge
⇒ Displaying extreme mood swings

The more of these signs a person shows, the greater the risk. Warning signs are associated with suicide but may not be what causes a suicide.

What To Do if someone you know exhibits warning signs of suicide:

⇒ Do not leave the person alone
⇒ Remove any firearms, alcohol, drugs or sharp objects that could be used in a suicide attempt
⇒ Call the New Mexico Crisis and Access Line at 1-855-NMCRISIS (662-7474), the Agora Crisis Center at 1-505-277-3013 or the U.S. National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
⇒ Take the person to an emergency room or seek help from a medical or mental health professional

For more information about suicide data, please contact:
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For more information about NMDOH’s Suicide Prevention Program, contact:
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