

# Sharing Data to Prevent Adult Male Suicide | 2018–2020

## Men in the Middle Years (MIMY)

In Washington state, MIMY (men 35–64 years of age) represent about 20% of the population. However, they account for nearly 40% of all suicide deaths. Their suicide rate has remained high (32 per 100,000, with 442 suicides in 2020), and is still the fourth leading cause of death for this group. Among MIMY, 52% of suicides were firearm-related, and more than 83% who died were Non-Hispanic whites.

Suicide doesn't just take a tremendous emotional toll on families and friends. It also leads to medical costs for people and families, and lost productivity for employers. In 2018, the total medical cost was \$1.64 million, and the cost in lost productivity was \$558 million for MIMY.

## What Happened and Why

The Washington Violent Death Reporting System (WA-VDRS) is part of the National Violent Death Reporting System (NVDRS) that collects more than 600 unique data elements from death certificates, coroner/medical examiner reports, law enforcement reports, and toxicology reports data on who, when, where, and how of suicide deaths help us better understand why they happened.

Between 2018 and 2020, 3,706 suicides were reported into WA-VDRS; of those, 37% were MIMY, approximately 39% had a history of suicide thoughts or plans, 30% had intimate partner problems (of those, 62% occurred within two weeks of the suicide), 22% had job or financial problems (of those, 40% happened within two weeks of the suicide). More than 23% told another person about their suicide thoughts or plans.

## #BeThe1To

The National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention and the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline promote #BeThe1To's five action steps for communicating with and supporting someone who may be thinking about suicide. Visit #BeThe1To for information about how and why to take action.

## WA-VDRS MIMY Suicides

BY FIREARM	BY OTHER MEANS
<b>71.3%</b> occurred at home	<b>54.9%</b> occurred at home
<b>25.8%</b> used alcohol in hours before the incident	<b>18.2%</b> used alcohol in hours before the incident
<b>45.8%</b> had a mental health problem (80.8% depression)	<b>47.1%</b> had a mental health problem (69.9% depression)
<b>26.9%</b> had treatment for mental health/substance use	<b>30.5%</b> had treatment for mental health/substance use
<b>12.8%</b> had history of suicide attempt	<b>21.2%</b> had history of suicide attempt
<b>32.5%</b> reported intimate partner problems	<b>28%</b> reported intimate partner problems

Examples of problems—partner, job/financial, substance use/mental health: depressed about divorce, child custody issues; heavy alcohol use, drank alcohol before the incident; drug use; had work-related stress; had difficulty finding a job; had child support issues; bipolar disorder, anxiety disorder, PTSD

### ASK



- Ask the tough questions directly, “Are you thinking about suicide?”

### BE THERE



- Listen to the reasons behind their distress.
- Listen with compassion and empathy—no dismissing or judgment.

### KEEP THEM SAFE



- Ask if they've thought about how they would do it.
- Separate them from anything they could use to hurt themselves.

### HELP THEM CONNECT



- Connect them with a support system such as their family, friends, clergy, coaches, co-workers, or therapists.
- Encourage them to call or text 988 or chat online at 988Lifeline.org

### FOLLOW UP



- Check in on a regular basis.
- Making contact in the days after a crisis can make the difference in keeping them alive.

## Suicide Is Preventable — Everyone Can Play a Role

Suicide prevention requires a comprehensive approach that occurs at all levels of society. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has developed a set of strategies to help states, communities, and people reduce risk and increase resilience:

- **Create** protective environments.
- **Promote** connectedness.
- **Teach** coping and problem-solving skills.
- **Identify** and **support** people at risk.
- **Lessen** harms and **prevent** future risk.
- **Strengthen** economic supports.
- **Strengthen** access and delivery of suicide care.

For planning and prevention resources visit [CDC's Suicide Prevention](#) website and [DOH's Suicide Prevention](#) webpage.

## More Resources

**Support:** [Man Therapy](#) is an interactive website that encourages men to consider their own mental and behavioral health needs, seek help, and encourage other men to seek help when needed. Men can interact with a fictional therapist, do a self-assessment, and get mental health tips.

**Prevention:** Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration ([SAMHSA](#)) provides suicide prevention information and other helpful resources to mental and behavioral health professionals, the general public, and people at risk.

**Means:** Reducing access to highly lethal means is an important part of suicide prevention. Learn more about means reduction at [Harvard's Means Matters](#).

**Location:** The majority of Washington suicide deaths and attempts occur in the home. Learn how to reduce access to lethal means before and during a crisis at [Washington's Safer Homes](#).

**Circumstances:** Suicide is complex, and many factors contribute to thoughts of suicide. Learn more from [CDC's Risk and Protective Factors for Suicide](#).

**Lived Experience:** If you are thinking of suicide or made a suicide attempt, know that help is available. Along with supportive family and friends, people who have experienced thoughts of suicide and suicide attempt survivors have created strong peer communities. Learn more at [Now Matters Now](#).

**Postvention:** It's important to support the people, families, and communities affected by suicide loss, to break the cycle of trauma and suicide risk. Learn more at the [American Foundation for Suicide Prevention](#).

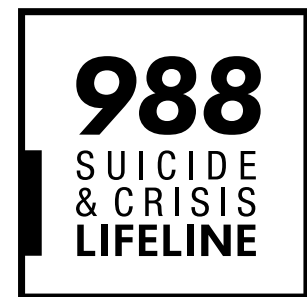
**Note:** *At this time NVDRS only tracks based on sex assigned at birth, per CDC.*

## Be Part of the Solution

Preventing suicide involves families, communities, partnerships, peers, and work across sectors.



## Crisis Help



**Text:** HEAL to 741741 if you or someone you know is in crisis.