



## **The 2012 National Strategy for Suicide Prevention Individuals in Justice and Child Welfare Settings**

The 2012 National Strategy for Suicide Prevention, the culmination of a joint effort by the Office of the U.S. Surgeon General and the National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention, is a comprehensive and collaborative long-term approach to suicide prevention that emphasizes that every American has a role in preventing suicide.

The 2012 strategy includes information on preventing suicides among individuals in justice and child welfare settings.

Suicide is often the most common cause of death in secure justice settings. Suicide among youth in contact with the juvenile justice system occurs at a rate about four times greater than the rate among youth in the general population because of the prevalence of many risk factors, such as a history of or existing mental illness and substance abuse; a history of suicidal behaviors; lack of mental health care; a history of abuse (e.g., emotional, physical, sexual); family discord/abuse; impulsive aggression; a history of interpersonal conflict; prior involvement in special education; legal/disciplinary problems; family history of suicide; poor family support; prior offenses; referral to juvenile court; and coming from a single-parent home.

To reduce the number of deaths by suicide in the juvenile justice system, the NSSP suggests that state juvenile justice agencies, along with regional and local jurisdictions, develop and implement comprehensive policies and programs to prevent suicide and provide care in the aftermath of a suicide death or attempt. These policies and programs should include:

- initial and annual training for all direct care, medical, and mental health personnel
- initial intake and ongoing assessment of incarcerated persons
- enhanced communication along the continuum of the justice system
- levels of supervision for persons at risk of self-harm and suicide
- appropriate suicide-resistant housing
- plans for an intervention
- better reporting structures

## Resources

### **Endangered Youth: A Report on Suicide Among Adolescents Involved with the Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice Systems, 2006**

Connecticut Center for Effective Practices

<http://www.chdi.org/endangereyouth>

This report offers an interdisciplinary framework that addresses the suicide risk for children, youth and their families involved in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems. Case studies illustrate the challenges confronting families, communities and professionals, while offering opportunities for learning and development of effective service delivery.

### **Ensuring the Seventh Generation: A Youth Suicide Prevention Toolkit for Tribal Child Welfare Programs, 2009**

National Indian Child Welfare Association (NICWA)

<http://www.nicwa.org/YouthSuicidePreventionToolkit/YSPTToolkit.pdf>

Intended for tribal child welfare workers and care providers, this toolkit discusses suicide risk factors associated with children in child welfare; warning signs caseworkers and care providers should watch for; suicide prevention and intervention strategies that can be applied in child welfare agencies; and mobilization of support networks around particular children.

### **Juvenile Suicide in Confinement: A National Survey, 2009**

National Center on Institutions and Alternatives

Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention

<https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/ojjdp/213691.pdf>

This report presents findings from the first national survey of juvenile suicides in confinement and offers recommendations for preventing suicide in juvenile facilities.

### **National Study of Jail Suicide: 20 Years Later, 2010**

National Center on Institutions and Alternatives and the National Institute of Corrections, DoJ  
[static.nicic.gov/Library/024308.pdf](http://static.nicic.gov/Library/024308.pdf)

This study presents the most comprehensive information on inmate suicides throughout the United States. It challenges jail and health care officials and their staffs to remain diligent in identifying and managing people at highest risk.

### **Preventing Suicide in Jails and Prisons, 2007**

World Health Organization (WHO) and International Association for Suicide Prevention

[http://www.who.int/mental\\_health/prevention/suicide/resource\\_jails\\_prisons.pdf](http://www.who.int/mental_health/prevention/suicide/resource_jails_prisons.pdf)

This article is aimed at correctional administrators who develop or implement mental health programs and correctional officers responsible for the safety and custody of suicidal inmates. It provides general background on suicide and identifies a number of key prevention components.

### **Suicide Prevention in Custody**

National Center on Institutions and Alternatives (NCIA)

<http://www.ncianet.org/services/suicide-prevention-in-custody>

This section of NCIA's website contains links to a number of resources on suicide prevention in jails and prisons, including Guiding Principles to Suicide Prevention in Correctional Facilities, 2011.

### **Suicide Prevention in Juvenile Correctional Facilities**

SPRC

[www.sprc.org/training-institute/juvenile-correctional-curriculum](http://www.sprc.org/training-institute/juvenile-correctional-curriculum)

This section of SPRC's website contains links to resources on suicide prevention among youth in contact with the juvenile justice system, a two-part webinar, and a packet of handouts on suicide prevention in juvenile correctional facilities.