

# Holiday Blues & Suicide Awareness

Braving the holidays and facing grief

# Bring Comfort/Offer Grace



- Special occasions around the calendar year are difficult for those who experienced a loss/death. However, the holidays are heightened in the grieving process.
- There is pressure to face the 'season' with a disposition of 'being over it' if the death/loss was months earlier.
- If recent to the holiday 'season' there is often a deeper depression in the grief when faced with parties, cheerful excitement, and happy families/events that crowd the calendar.

# Remember: Comfort/Grace

- Set limits for yourself
- Be honest about feelings and energy
- Make your needs known to family/friends
- Address traditions



# Still



- Take time to embrace the memories, emotions, and process the grief.
- Take care and be gentle with self.
- Commemorate and celebrate

# Children Grieve Too



*By honoring Children's Grief Awareness Day, we can create a world in which death and grieving is integrated into our lives as a normal life event, and in such a way that leads to greater compassion, hope, and growth.*

#CGADHope



# Suicide Awareness

- U.S. Centers for Disease Control (from 2010) indicate that suicides were actually lowest during the months of November, December, and January, and peaked between April and August.
- Up to 90 percent of people who die by suicide have clinical depression or another diagnosable mental disorder, often co-occurring with substance abuse. Adverse or traumatic life events, especially in combination with clinical depression, increase suicide risk.

# Warning Signs

- Suicidal ideation thoughts and statements: “wish I wasn’t here”  
“why was I born”
- Substance abuse and use of alcohol/drugs
- Aggressive  
moods/behaviors/mood swings
- Social withdrawal
- Talking and writing about death
- Impulsive and reckless behavior

# Risks Factors

- Family history of suicide
- Substance abuse/Intoxication
- Access to firearms
- Serious or chronic illness
- Gender
- History of trauma and abuse
- Isolation/prolonged stress
- Age
- Recent loss or tragedy
- Sleep deprivation

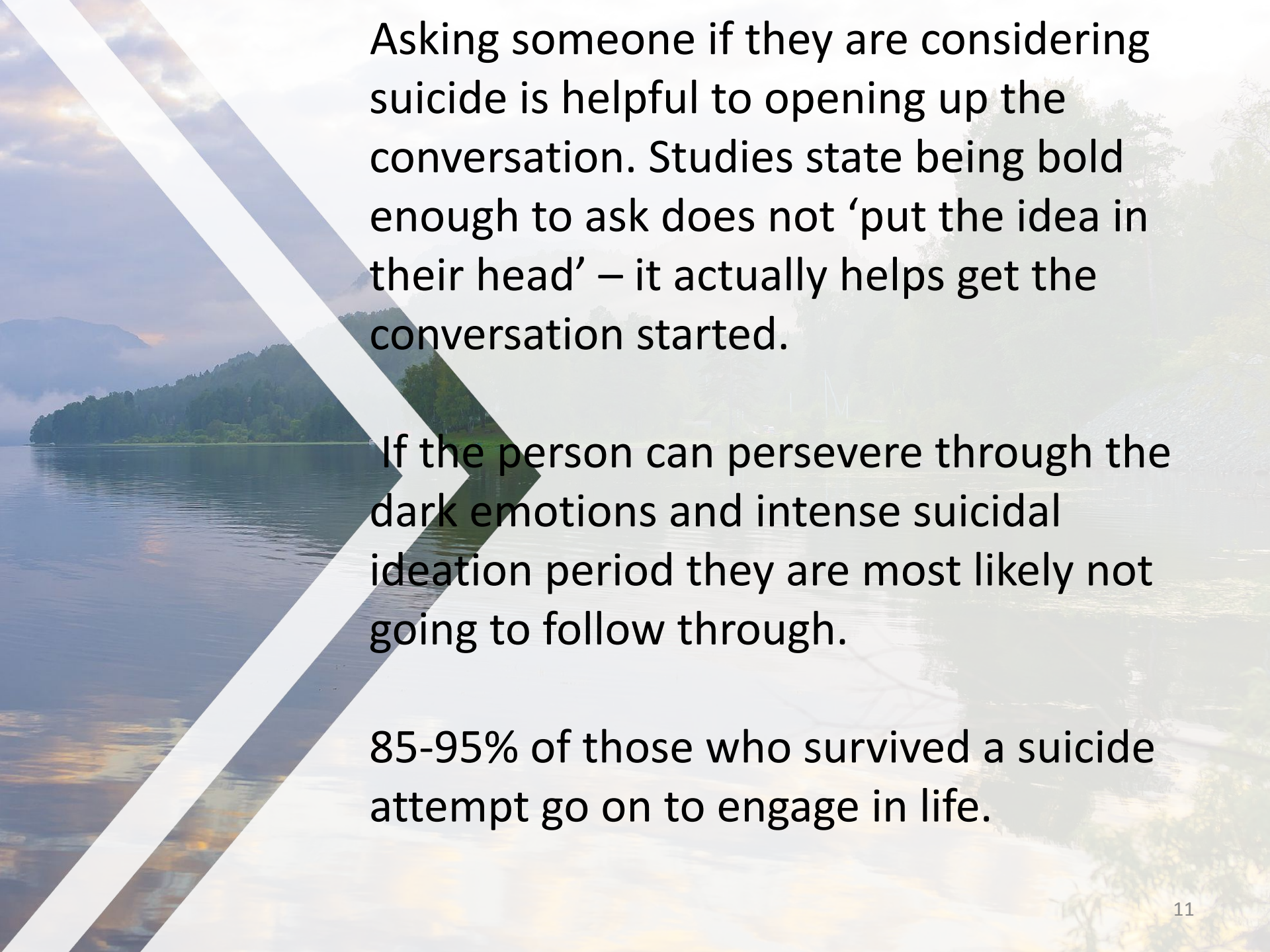


# Statistics

- Each year 44,965 Americans die by suicide
- That averages 123 per day
- White males were 7 out of 10 suicides in 2016
- 51% are done with a firearm
- The highest rate is among the middle age group and white males in particular
- Men die by suicide 3.52x more than women
- For every suicide there has been approx. 25 previous attempts
- Suicide cost the US \$69 billion dollars every year
- Globally: the USA falls at number 38 out of 105 countries. Men globally commit suicide more than women except in China.

# Prevention

- People find it difficult to find positive solutions and getting them help with the decision making and behavioral control affected by the brain often is helpful.
- Limiting access to methods of items and opportunities to commit suicide dramatically decreases the rates
- 90% have a mental health condition that is treatable with medications.
- Cognitive Behavior Therapy and Dialectical Behavior Therapy is helpful.



Asking someone if they are considering suicide is helpful to opening up the conversation. Studies state being bold enough to ask does not ‘put the idea in their head’ – it actually helps get the conversation started.

If the person can persevere through the dark emotions and intense suicidal ideation period they are most likely not going to follow through.

85-95% of those who survived a suicide attempt go on to engage in life.

# When I Think of Death

## by Maya Angelou

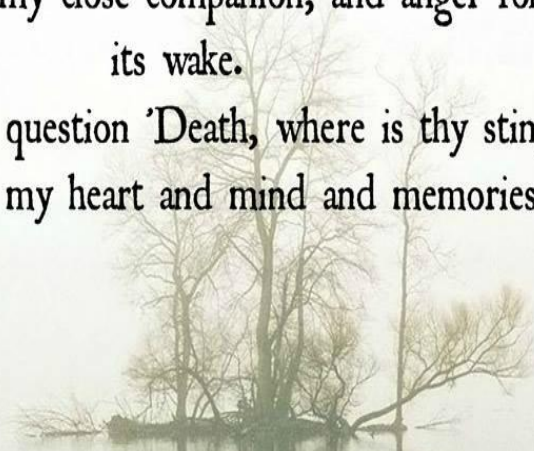
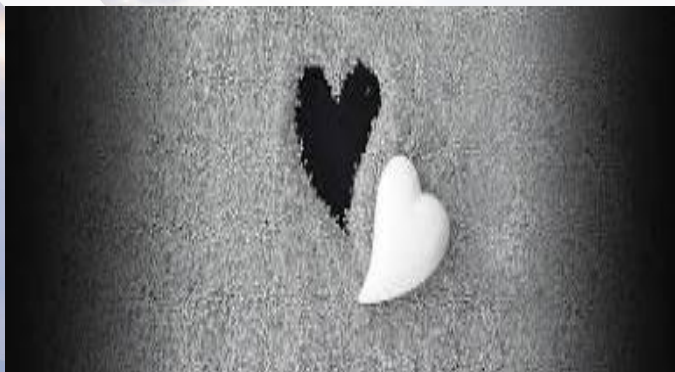
When I think of death, and of late the idea has come with alarming frequency, I seem at peace with the idea that a day will dawn when I will no longer be among those living in this valley of strange humors.

I can accept the idea of my own demise, but I am unable to accept the death of anyone else.

I find it impossible to let a friend or relative go into that country of no return.

Disbelief becomes my close companion, and anger follows in its wake.

I answer the heroic question 'Death, where is thy sting?' with 'it is here in my heart and mind and memories.'



# References

afsp.org/research is cite for prevention info.

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/tests-procedures/cognitive-behavioral-therapy/about/pac-20384610>

<https://www.cdc.gov>

[http://www.dana.org/Briefing\\_Papers/Holiday\\_Blues\\_Getting\\_the\\_Facts\\_Forgetting\\_the\\_Myth/](http://www.dana.org/Briefing_Papers/Holiday_Blues_Getting_the_Facts_Forgetting_the_Myth/)

[www.aacap.org](http://www.aacap.org)).

**Healing Your Grieving Heart for Kids: 100 Practical Ideas by Alan D. Wolfelt PhD**