

Suicides hit all-time high in Singapore in 2012

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Suicides in Singapore hit an all-time high of 487 in 2012 as more young people bogged down by stress and relationship woes took their own lives, a charity group dealing with the problem said Friday.

The tally, a 29 percent increase from the 2011 total, was boosted by an 80 percent rise in the 20-29 age bracket, the Samaritans of Singapore (SOS) said in a statement.

"Common problems presented by this group of people involved [stressful life events](#), and interpersonal [relationship issues](#)," said SOS, which aims to prevent suicides by providing [emotional support](#) through private counselling and a 24-hour telephone hotline.

"These include unemployment, stress with studies or work, financial worries, family life, and struggles with social interactions and feelings of loneliness."

Christine Wong, executive director of SOS, said young people under stress "tend to hide their pain behind a facade, not knowing where, how or who they can approach for help".

"People around them may not be aware of their distress and are hence unable to provide the support needed," she said in the statement.

Wong added that the community should play an important role in "de-stigmatising" suicide by encouraging those under stress to talk about

their struggles and suicidal feelings.

SOS received 39,994 calls on its telephone hotline in 2012, down from 40,025 in 2011.

Suicides cases have consistently hovered around two percent of total deaths in Singapore, an affluent city-state of 5.3 million residents known for its pressure-laden school system.

Despite a virtually full employment rate, Singapore also has a highly competitive work environment.

Suicide is an offence in the compact island-state, and anyone who survives an attempt faces a jail term of up to a year, a fine or both.

The World Health Organisation last year said one million people commit suicide every year worldwide, accounting for more deaths than wars and murders put together.

The number of [suicide attempts](#) is five times higher, it said, with five percent of the people in the world having tried to kill themselves at least once during their lifetime.

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