

Drug abusers at risk for suicidal thoughts, survey finds

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Expert says providing support, treatment could help prevent needless deaths in this high-risk group.

(HealthDay)—American adults who use illicit drugs are much more likely to think about suicide than those in the general population, a new federal government survey says.

Overall, slightly less than 4 percent of Americans 18 and older had serious thoughts about suicide in the past year. But for [illicit drug users](#), the rate was 9.4 percent, according to the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA) 2012 National Survey on Drug Use and Health report.

The percentage of adults who said they had serious thoughts of suicide within the past year varied by the type of drug they used, ranging from 9.6 percent of those who used marijuana to nearly 21 percent of those who used sedatives for non-medical purposes.

The report's findings are from a [national survey](#) of about 70,000 people, aged 12 and older.

"Suicide takes a devastating toll on individuals, families and communities across our nation," Dr. Peter Delany, director of SAMHSA's Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Health, said in an agency news release.

"We must reach out to all segments of our community to provide them with the support and treatment they need so that we can help prevent more needless deaths and shattered lives," Delany added.

People in crisis or those who know someone who may be at immediate risk of attempting suicide are urged to call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1-800-273-TALK (8255). This network provides immediate free and confidential, 24-hour crisis counseling to anyone in the country, every day of the year.

More information: The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has more about [suicide prevention](#).

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