

Suicide in the Time of COVID-19

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UNITED STATES, July 2, 2020
/EINPresswire.com/ -- We are undergoing a once-in-a-century (for most of us, a once-in-a-lifetime) pandemic, an international health crisis that has caused unprecedented fear and pain for many people and nations, has upended our norms, and is restructuring our current reality. In such uncertain times, it's imperative to listen to the experts and follow their instructions to ensure that we emerge safe, healthy, and alive—with our loved ones just as intact. Above all, it's important to face uncertainty and fear with the only thing that is guaranteed to make today and tomorrow better: loving-kindness toward ourselves, our loved ones, and society as a whole.



This article on Suicide shares the expert insight of mental health professional Dr. Linda Miles, with content drawn from an interview conducted by Francine Bianco Tax. Dr. Miles worked as Director of Crisis Programs in Community Mental Health and has worked as psychotherapist for over 35 years.

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Dr. Linda Miles

National Suicide Prevention Hotline: 1-800-273-8255

How do you find help if you're suicidal?

Or perhaps someone you know—a family member, friend, neighbor, or person in your community—has suicidal tendencies. COVID-19, an unconventional virus that has

caused unconventional challenges for getting help. There are many resources online. As rates of

infection and death increase, so do the mental health toll.

Media campaigns around the world remind people that social distancing equals physical distancing, not emotional distancing. The message is: we're all in this together, even though we are apart. There are many for whom this imposed isolation is scary, depressing, or lonely. While suicide rates haven't been recorded in prior pandemic-related lockdowns throughout history, experts know that social isolation is related to suicide. Those most vulnerable, they warn, include people who have a history of self-destructive distress.[1] Isolation is one of the many triggers. Due to COVID-19, many people are suddenly unemployed or uncertain of their job security, struggle to make ends meet, and feel disconnected from their usual support systems.

RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE:

- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

The Lifeline provides 24/7, free and confidential support for people in distress, prevention, and crisis resources for you or your loved ones, and best practices for professionals. Call 1-800-273-TALK (8255) or chat.

- Crisis Text Line

Text Line is free, 24/7 support for those in crisis. Text 741741 from anywhere in the U.S. to text with a trained Crisis Counselor

- Veterans Crisis Line

The Veterans Crisis Line is a free, confidential resource that's available to anyone, even if you're not registered with VA or enrolled in VA health care. If you're a veteran in crisis or concerned about one, there are VA responders standing by to help 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Call 1-800-273-8255 and press 1 or text 838255.

- SAMHSA's Suicide Prevention Resource Center

SAMHSA's SPRC provides accurate data, up-to-date research, and knowledge of effective strategies and interventions that are essential to our ability to prevent suicide. Find programs, toolkits, fact sheets, and other resources to help you take effective action.

- National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention

The National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention (Action Alliance) is the nation's public-private partnership for suicide prevention. The Action Alliance works with more than 250 national partners to advance the National Strategy for Suicide Prevention.

Here are a few practices to cope with Covid challenges:

- Connect with nature. Nature soothes, restores, and connects us to ourselves and to the world at large.

- Get moving. Moving changes the chemistry of the body, including the mind. It can be as

successful as medication when it comes to alleviating anxiety and depression.

- Be mindful. Mindfulness minimizes anxiety and boosts happiness, helping to develop compassion, curiosity, empathy, focus, and clarity. There are many ways to be mindful, but often it comes to slowing down, focusing on your breathing and inner self, cultivating gratitude, and noticing what makes life worth living.

- Connect with others. Feeling lonely is as detrimental to your health as smoking 15 cigarettes a day. Go for a walk with a friend who lives nearby, even if it means having to walk on opposite ends of the street. Even if you can't physically be with your loved ones, you can always connect through the phone or online. If you need help, don't hesitate to reach out. Suicide prevention lines are available 24/7. Contact a friend, therapist, church or community counselor, or online professional to gain support.

ABOUT DR. MILES

Dr. Linda Miles is a leading psychotherapist, crisis therapist, award-winning author, and relationship expert. She has studied and worked in the field of counseling psychology for over 35 years and focuses on mindfulness, stress reduction, mental health, and relationships. She has published several books on relationships and mindfulness (the latest: *Change Your Story, Change Your Brain*) as well as articles in the *Wall Street Journal*, *Boston Globe*, *Reuters*, and *Miami Herald*, and has appeared as a guest expert on numerous national TV shows including CNN, Fox News, ABC, and NBC. You can find additional resources on Dr. Miles' Facebook page, *Mindfulness Rewrites*, or at www.DrLindaMiles.com.

ABOUT FRANCINE BIANCO TAX

Francine Bianco Tax is a professional film and television actress, singer, and member of SAG-AFTRA, as well as the proud mother of twins. With a B.F.A. in Theater from Adelphi University, Francine pursues her love of knowledge by currently studying Filmmaking and Journalism at De Sales University. She is a former QVC TV guest host, and radio-internet founder, producer, and host of her program *Parenting Matters*. She is most interested in sharing inspiring human interest stories and offering resources that improve the lives of others.

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