



UNIF 2018

GUIA DE ESTUDOS

WHO (2018)

Challenges and impacts of increasing
suicide levels in developed countries

DIRETORES

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1. Directors Presentation:

Isabella Dias - Director

Hello my fellow delegates! My name is Isabella, I'm 19 years old, and I'm studying international relations at PUC Minas since the beginning of 2018. I simulated for the first time at MiniONU, and last year I was an "emergency delegate" because the delegate of Korea didn't show up. Simulating, for me, is one of the best experiences a person can have, and in another language, it's even better! I'm really excited to see the discussions you're going to make about this matter that is so important in our society nowadays, and to make new friends in this committee! Hope you enjoy it, and don't be afraid to speak in English! Everyone here makes mistakes sometimes and it's completely normal to misspell words or expressions sometimes! UNIF is a very special project for me because when I started this whole idea of simulations here at IFMG I couldn't imagine that this could happen! So, I'm really happy to be here participating for the first time as director, with the English committee and I hope to see you all there!

Lucas Vinícius - Director

Hi delegates, my name is Lucas, I'm 18 years old. My first simulation was MiniONU 2017, and I loved it! The committee was in English and its theme was drug trafficking in Latin America. From the first MOC to the final celebration, I was amazed. And that's why I kept going to simulations. Although I didn't start earlier, I love to simulate, and to have the opportunity to be an assistant director is an honor to me. When we first thought about this matter, we knew it was very current in the society, and easy for people to talk about it. I know that maybe it's your first English committee or even the first committee you attend to, but don't be apprehensive to speak, we all have difficulties and we can overcome them together! I hope you make a lot of friends and... If you want peace, prepare for the debate!

Júlia Pellegrinelli- Director

Hello beautiful delegate reading this study guide, my name is Júlia Pellegrinelli. I've been a delegate in a few UN models, most of them in English, and this is my second time as a director. I've found that engaging in these debates is a very enriching

experience both as an intellectual activity and as personal adventure. I'm very excited to see all the thoughtful discussions you will take in about this delicate, but essential topic. And, I would like to remind you that there is no reason to be nervous just because this is your first time as delegate or because you will be required to speak in english. Everone make miztakes ;) - I'm also P.H.D in bad jokes -. I'm thrilled to be part of this project and I hope are too!

2. Introduction

First of all, we would like to offer help. Suicide is a really delicate matter, and if you're passing through any situation that makes you feel like your life is not worth it, you can look for help. Talk to a friend, a relative, or anyone you trust. You also can call to "Centro de Valorização da Vida". Here in Brazil, the number is 188. Recently, the line became a government line, and you can call whenever you want just like na emergency number. You're not alone!

The word *suicide*, indicates the act of killing yourself. The suicide can be defined as the necessity to pursue, in death, a refugee for the intolerable suffering. Suicide, most of times is the result of a history of suffering of the individual, including mental diseases, bullying, violence and any other things that make suffering way beyond the limit, and lead to the thought that it's life isn't important anymore, and the death will solve these questions.

According to WHO: "Each suicide is a personal tragedy that prematurely takes the life of an individual and has a continuing ripple effect, dramatically affecting the lives of families, friends and communities. Every year, more than 800 000 people die by suicide – one person every 40 seconds."

Despite that the numbers differ from each country, young people are among the most affected by suicide, once it has turned to be the second leading cause of death for those between 15 and 26 years-old.

Some factors, such as social, psychological, and cultural, can lead someone to suicidal behavior, but these factors attached to mental disorders and suicide means that those people feel unable to seek help.

The context is imperative to understanding the risk of suicide. They occur impulsively in moments of crisis and ready access to the means of suicide – such as pesticides or firearms – can determine whether a person lives or dies. Other risk factors for suicide include a breakdown in the ability to deal with acute or chronic life stresses, such as financial problems. In addition, cases of gender-based violence and child abuse are strongly associated with suicidal behaviour. Suicide rates also vary within countries, with higher rates among those who are minorities or experience discrimination.

Stigma, when attached to mental illness and suicide, is responsible for people not seeking for help. Breaking down taboos and raising community awareness are important factors that may contribute to reduce the suicide rate on the countries willing to make policies based on this fact. And although that many deaths are preventable, according to evidence, suicide is often a low-priority for governments.

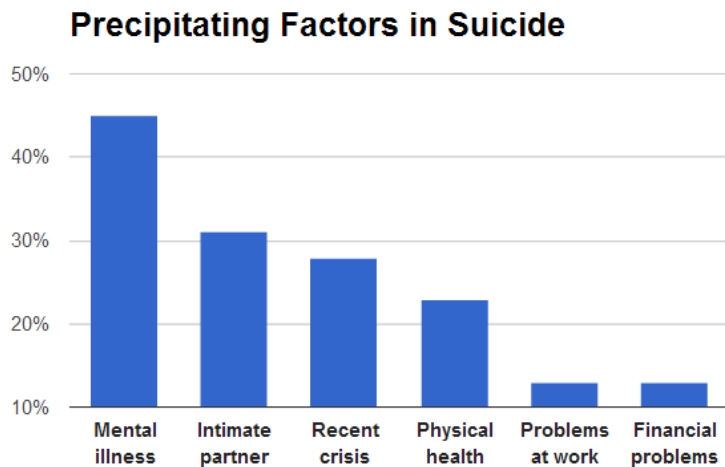
The developed countries that have the highest suicide levels are South Korea, Russia and Japan. The importance of understanding and debating the increasing suicide levels in developed countries is that it affects especially young people because they are the future of their nations. Also, the increase of these levels directly affects the employment-to-population ratio, since the age range is exactly the age of this ratio.

The committee will take place in Geneva, Switzerland in the World Health Organization head office, between September 13 and 15, and the hosts of this meeting are Switzerland and the WHO delegate. The committee hopes that the delegates find a solution for the suicide issue, using the human rights and respecting each other's sovereignty and culture. The sovereignty claims that one country can't intervene on another country's politics without consent.

3. The main causes and methods

When we deal with the suicide issue, the first thing that needs to be taken into consideration is what causes suicide. In developed countries, we can mention 6 principal causes: mental diseases, intimate partners, recent crisis, the physical health,

problems at work and financial problems, as we can see this graph:



Source: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/21866088>

Adding to that fact, the most used methods in developed countries are firearms, car exhaust and poisoning. They are most used, because of the easiness to acquire them, specially countries that have free arms trade, and poor regulation on the selling of medicines and toxic substances.

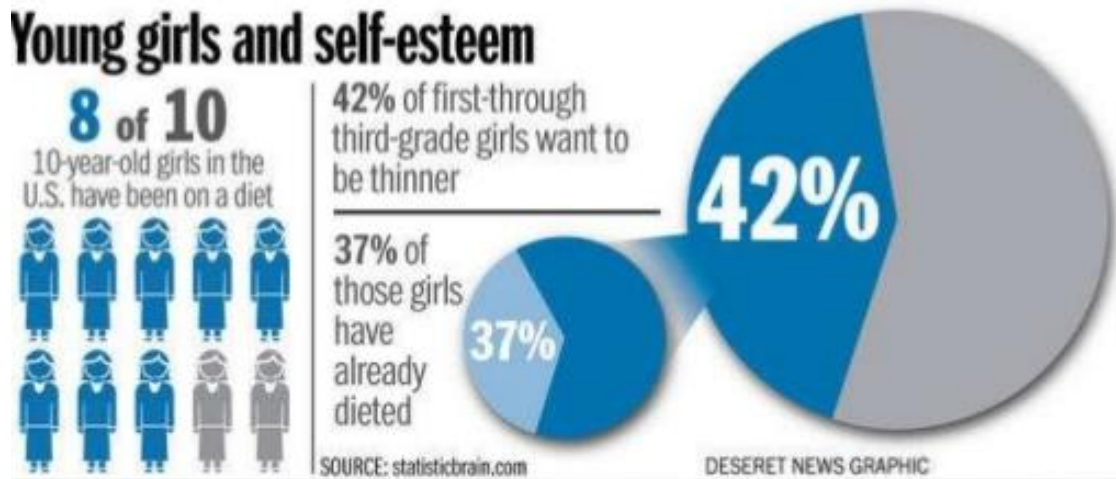
As we already mentioned here, one of the methods used in suicide attempts is through the abuse of medicines. These medicines usually are easy to get in some countries, and another times the medical doctors are careless, by making the prescription easy for anyone to get.

3.1 The beauty standards

Another thing that influences suicide nowadays, is the beauty standards that make people feel like they don't fit in the society because they don't have a certain weight, hair, clothes or way of life. This one, happens specially with girls, as we can see on this quote:

"We also need to change the social and cultural environment directly so that girls are not judged on their looks and are not held back from getting a seat at whatever table they want, be it in the boardroom, or in parliament, because of body image concerns." Seven in 10 girls (nine out of 10 in the UK) with low body esteem told the researchers they stopped themselves from eating or otherwise put their health at risk. Eight out of 10 (nine out of 10 in the UK) said they avoided seeing friends and family or trying out for a team or club. (SIDDIQUE, 2017)

The authors identified reasons for hope in the fact that seven out of 10 girls said too much importance was placed on beauty as a source of happiness. Eight out of 10 said every girl had something beautiful about them. (SIDDIQUE, 2017)



One of the countries in this committee that supports the diversity of beauty in media, is Russia, supporting different cultures and body types in their media vehicles. This problem of beauty standards, can be fit on recent crisis, physical health and mental illness, since most of people that suffer with this problem, have mental diseases like bulimia and anorexia. Diseases that can lead to depression, and later the suicide issue.

3.2 Television and Internet

Adding to this media idea, we can mention the influence of television on this matter. In the beginning of 2017, the United States television launched the show “13 reasons why”, that talks about why a girl has committed suicide. It had a huge impact on people, specially Young people, that are the most influenced about television and media, since they are exposed to every kind of content exposed by the media, through internet and their devices. The influence of media in suicide is not a new thing. In ancient times, another books had already influenced other people into suicide.

It found that within three weeks of the series premiere on March 31, there was a significant rise in internet searches concerning suicide, by about 19 per cent (900,000 to 1.5 million more searches than usual, in other words). In that same three weeks, it also set a record for being the most tweeted about TV series in 2017 so far.

In the study, the authors wrote, “Our analyses suggest 13 Reasons Why, in its present form, has both increased suicidal awareness while unintentionally increasing suicidal ideation. The most rising queries focused on suicidal ideation. For instance, ‘how to commit suicide’, ‘commit suicide’ and ‘how to kill yourself’ were all significantly higher.”

John Ayers, professor of public health at San Diego State University, commented on the study via the Washington Post: “Past studies have validated that internet searches mirror real-world suicide rates, so suicide rates have likely gone up as a result of this program. For me, as a data-driven public health scientist, I see this troubling data as a strong call to action. The show must be taken down.” (AHSAN, 2017)

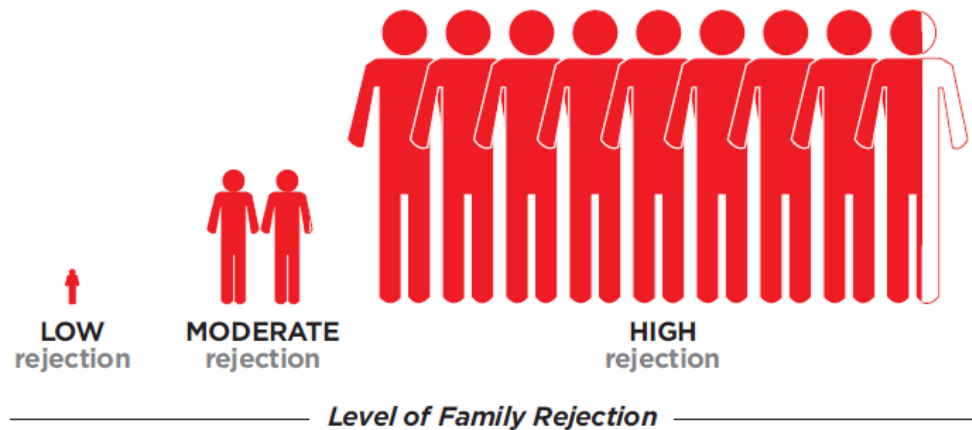
Internet is also a potential suicide increaser, since people can search anything on it, from methods, to how to buy a gun, pills or poison, which makes internet, specially its market, a huge risk for the increasing suicide levels.

3.3 Sexuality and suicide

Adding to all of this causes, another one that we can't leave behind is sexuality. LGBTQI people, most of the times, suffer a lot inside the society, and this suffering can lead to mental diseases such as depression, anxiety, and later suicide. This group suffer from a high level of suicide levels specially in countries that make laws that discriminate them. “Depression and drug use among LGBT people have both been shown to increase significantly after new laws that discriminate against gay people are passed” (HATZENBUEHLER, MCLAUGHLIN, KEYES, HASIN, 2010)

Lifetime Suicide Attempts for Highly Rejected LGBT Young People

(One or more times)



Ryan, Family Acceptance Project, 2009

Source: <https://approachingjustice.net/2015/03/24/how-many-deaths-will-it-take/>

Suicide Rates in the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Community

Compared to their Straight Peers

LGB youth are **4x** more likely to attempt suicide

Questioning youth are **3x** more likely to attempt suicide

Nearly **50%** of young transgender people have seriously thought about taking their lives, and **25%** report having made a suicide attempt.

Suicide attempts by LGB and questioning youth are **4-6x** more likely to result in:

injury
poisoning
or overdose
that requires treatment from a doctor or nurse, compared to their straight peers.

2 Main Reasons

Lack of Parental Support

LGB youth who come from highly rejecting families are **8.4x** as likely to have attempted suicide as LGB peers who reported no or low levels of family rejection.

Bullying

Each episode of LGBT victimization, such as physical or verbal harassment or abuse, increases the likelihood of self-harming behavior by **2.5x** on average.

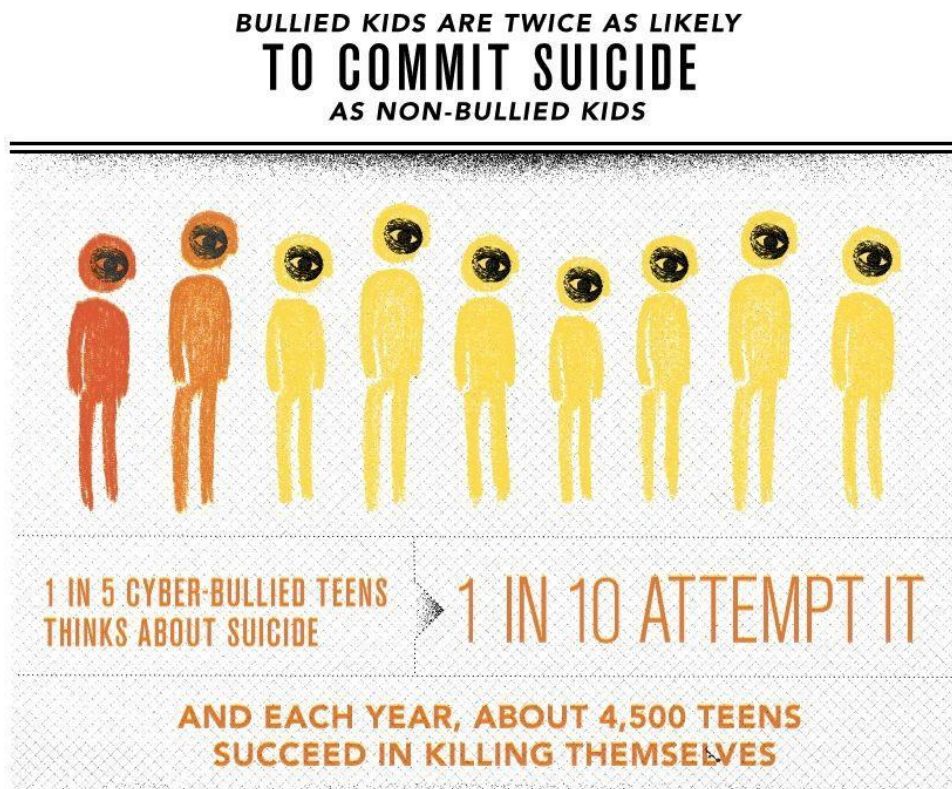
Sources: GoodTherapy.org, thetrevorproject.org

Source: <http://ballbearingsmag.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/LGBT-Suicide-Rates-Design-1.jpg>

3.4 Bullying

Other problem, that specially young people pass through is the bullying matter. At school, the youths can suffer bullying because they don't fit with the popular crew, or because they're considered "nerds". Bullying can be mental and physical, and it can lead to mental diseases, like we mentioned in this guide: anorexia, bulimia, depression and anxiety. Something that needs to worry all countries, because specially developed countries, can't afford losing the young population, since their population is becoming older.

Nowadays, specially the cyberbullying is being very used for people make other people feel like they're not worth it and that they don't fit. Cyberbullying is the bullying that uses the internet as a vehicle for the violence to happen. As we live in a globalized world, and specially Young people are involved with the internet the whole day, this kind of bullying gets even easier to be practiced, showing that we must pay attention on this matter, once it's connected with suicide levels increase. An example of cyberbullying is the leak of nudes, and pages to humiliate other people.

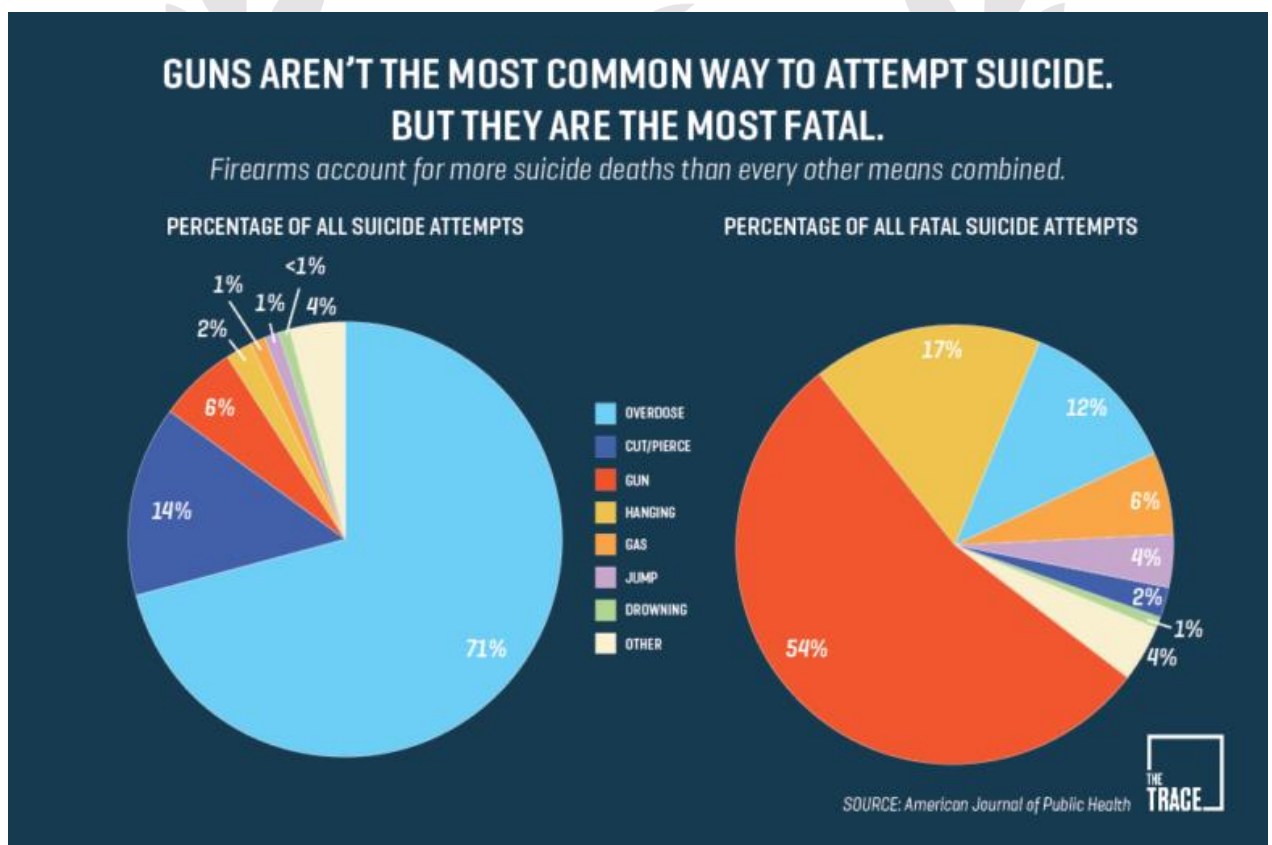


Source: <http://weinspirefutures.com/uncategorized/bullying-infographics/>

The chair strongly advises you to conduct some research about the laws that involve your representations about the matters that we mentioned here, and also to learn more about this topic. We will share some extra links for you to get more informed about it.

4. The use of guns

One of the used methods in attempting suicide, is by using a gun. It's not the most used, but it is the most fatal. Some countries have a legalized Market for guns, making it an easy task to get one of them. Another thing we can add to the use of guns, is that it is allied to the fact that men kill themselves more than women. Men usually use guns as a method for suicide, that are way deadlier than the method that is most chosen by the women: pills or poison. With that, we can conclude that men usually attempt suicide more than women. Also, the mental health is the major cause of suicide and men are less likely to seek for help when compared to women. (SHAW, 2016)



Source: <https://www.thetrace.org/2016/09/10-facts-guns-suicide-prevention-month/>

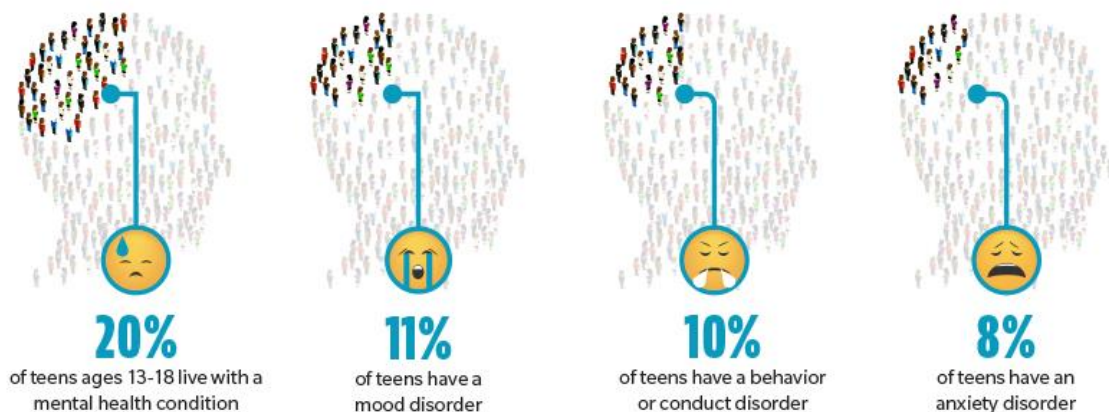
1. Mental Illness

As we mentioned before, one of the main causes of the suicide attempts are the mental disorders. They affect people all over the world, and sometimes they are not even diagnosed, because of the existence of a prejudice with psychiatrists consults, due to the fact that people are dubious about the efficiency of psychology as a field. “The majority (more than 90 per cent) of those who do die because of a suicide have been diagnosed with a mental illness. People with mental illness do have higher rates of suicidal thoughts and suicide than the general population.” (CASP)

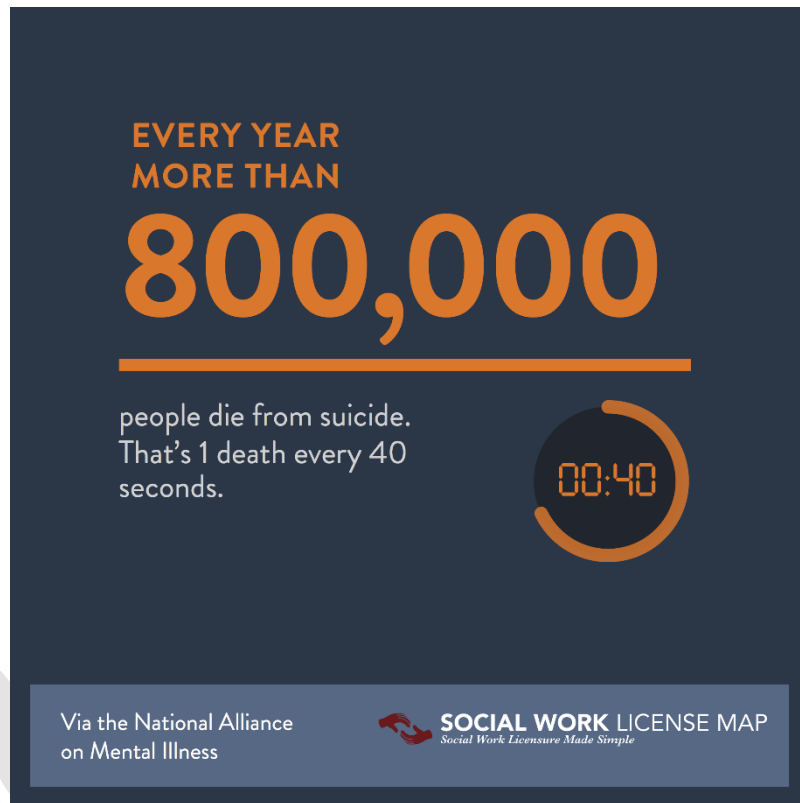
Bipolar disorder has the highest risk of suicide (usually during a depressed episode or mixed state) at 15-20%, followed by schizophrenia (10-15%) (note that some studies put that rate higher), borderline personality disorder (10-15%), and unipolar depression (5-10%) (experts used to believe the rate was higher, but that was when studies largely limited their samples to hospital populations). The presence of anxiety or substance abuse further increases the risk of suicide. Once you take comorbidity into consideration, schizophrenia combined with a mood disorder has the highest risk of suicide (25-30%). Borderline personality disorder has the highest risk for attempted suicide (70-80%). Those with bipolar disorder are most likely to succeed in their attempts at suicide (for the general population, 1-in-30 attempts are successful; among those with bipolar disorder, 1-in-3 attempts are successful). (HURBER-JULIE, 2016)

Mental illness in youth

The earlier mental illness is detected, the earlier parents and professionals can intervene, leading to faster diagnoses, effective treatment and better life outcomes.



Source: <https://communityimpact.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/SLM-2018-03-news-02.jpg>



Source:

<https://cdn2.socialworklicensemap.com/content/8516a2d102994535bac606a4081359f6/Suicide-Minigraphic.png>

2. Country Positioning

In this topic we are going to inform you all about some basic information of the countries presente in this committee. This can be very useful, but we strongly recommend that you look for more information!

7.1. Denmark

Denmark is an European country, and has some politics to prevent suicide. Their inhabitants can call their suicide hotline through an easy number, and the cal lis anonymous. The country also provides help centers across its territory with specialized professionals that are prepared to help people in need. All of those strategies, made the number of suicides in Denmark decrease a lot in the last years, but it still need to be better: the government will make large cuts on suicide prevention programs and it will affect the country! Also, in Denmark, civilians can obtain guns for hunting or sport shooting aged 16 above. "For the first time ever, a Danish government has launched a LGBT action plan in a bid to prevent discrimination and promote equal opportunity and security for the LGBT community." (W. CHRISTIAN,2018) The Chair also recommend two really nice texts, available on those links: <http://cphpost.dk/news/suicide-numbers-way-down-in-denmark.html>; <http://cphpost.dk/news/national/danish-government-proposes-more-cuts-to-suicide-prevention.html>.

7.2. World Health Organization

As one of the hosts of this reunion, the World Health Organization is an observer member, once it is a non-governmental organization and is considered relevant for our debate. The delegate can make speeches, influence the discussion, vote in procedural matters, but can't vote on substantial matters. The World Health Organization takes place at Geneva, Switzerland, that happens to be a country in which the suicide levels are pretty high. The World Health Organization is always looking for solutions to improve suicide prevention effectiveness in all countries, specially the developed ones that recently are presenting a really high level of it, putting on risk lots of human beings. The Chair recommends the delegate to take a look at this part of WHO website about suicide prevention, there you'll find useful arguments that can be interesting to add more to the discussion: http://www.who.int/mental_health/suicide-prevention/en/.

6.3 Switzerland

The suicide rate in Switzerland is 10.7 per 100,000. The most used method by women to commit suicide is poison, and by men is shooting. It's worth noting that in Switzerland it is legal to own semi-automatic guns. Euthanasia is also allowed by law in this nation.

6.4 Germany

The suicide rate in Germany is 9.1 per 100,000 and it has been declining rapidly in the last two decades. Euthanasia is legal in this country.

6.5 Belgium

In 2002 Belgium legalized euthanasia for adults in very specific cases, but by the year of 2014 the law was extended to children, and then the number of cases has sharply increased, and the further modifications on the law extended and facilitated it. In 2015 Belgium was considered to be one of the most liberal countries regarding to assisted suicide in the world, and currently has become a center for people seeking euthanasia from all across Europe.

6.6 Finland

Being in a scenario of wars in World War II, many people died, and since death causes a cascade effect, the generation after the end of WWII suffered from stress and grief, then the suicide rate has strongly increased.

Back in 1990, Finland had over 1500 cases of suicide according to the country data. But since then, it has become one of the top countries in suicide prevention. Although the country is still above average, suicide mortality has decreased 40 per cent in the past 15 years. Suicide affects mostly men (3 men for 1 woman), which culturally are expected to be strong and never show weakness.

6.7 Russia

Russia is one of countries with the highest suicide rates in the world. Suicide in Russia affects, disproportionately, one half of the population more than another: men suicide rate is over six times higher than women's. This gender disparity is likely to be related to the fact that men have more immediate access to lethal means of suicide, such as firearms and drugs. Thus, Russia has the third-highest teenage suicide rate in the world.

According to psychiatrists, alcohol abuse, domestic violence, and rigid parenting all play a role. Social conformity is strictly enforced, especially out of the big cities. Isolation is big problem, considering such a large country.

6.8 France

According to statistics, in 2009, the number of suicide in France per 100,000 inhabitants were 23.5 for men and 7.5 for women, while the average number of suicide in the European Union stood in 16.8 and 4.4 for men and women respectively. Despite the 26 percent drop, the country is still among the European countries with the highest suicide rate. Statistics show that the majority of people who commit suicide are aged between 35-64. Also, certain rural areas of France are more affected, due to the lack of access to services.

6.9 Japan

Although in 2016 Japan hit the lowest suicide rate in 22 years, this is the main cause of death among people aged between 15-39. In the country mental illness is still seen as a weakness or failure, leading the individuals to feel that they are a burden to everyone, that there's no way out, making suicide a real option.

Culturally, Japanese people tend to interpret suicide as a honorable death, due to Samurai practice of committing *Sepukku*, or to the young *Kamikaze* pilots in 1945. As a non-Christian country, they don't criminalize suicide, in fact, some citizens see as a way of taking responsibility.

6.10 South Korea

After a remarkable growth after the World War II, South Korea became the 13th largest economy in the world. This profound economic growth brought along with it major social problems. The country has the higher suicide rate in the world for children aged between 10-19 and elderly over 60 years-old.

Being one of the highest high-stress society in the world affects deeply in suicide rate. Suicide is the the fourth most common cause of death, 40 people commit suicide every day. According to the South Korean Health and Welfare Ministry, 90

percent of the people that committed suicide had a psychiatric condition, such as anxiety or depression, often caused by stress.

6.11 United States of America

Suicide has been nearly indistinctly raising in the US since 1999. In 2016, almost 45 thousand lives were lost due to suicide. Although it's not caused by only one factor, mental illness are often seen as the cause of self-murder. Those illness are often related to relationships, substance use and money.

According to lead researcher of CDC Dr Deborah Stone, some western states in the US have some of the highest rates of suicide throughout history, leading researches to believe that it could be related to the fact that they tend to be more rural, which are recovering from economic downturns. Thus, people tend to have less access to proper care.

6.12 Sweden

Although Sweden doesn't have a high suicide rate, suicide is the leading cause of death among men aged between 15-39. Over the past 15 years, Sweden's suicide rate declined almost 20 percent, but according to Suicide Zero's general secretary Alfred Skogberg and coordinator Lotta Ekdahl, suicide prevention researches doesn't receive enough resources.

6.13 Norway

Suicide in Norway was relatively low during the last century, but in the past 20 years, the suicide rate has doubled. The increase was higher for the age group 15-29. Most of the individuals who committed suicide were treated for mental disorders and had problems with drugs and alcohol.

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