Simple answers, deeper understanding

What causes suicide: the 3 factors

Suicide isn't too complex to understand. What's complex is our human experience. We are all at the greatest risk when we experience these three factors at the same time.

1 Extreme distress

It isn't always caused by a major life event. Pay attention to words and actions: someone in extreme distress tends to fixate on one thing being a problem, or on everything being a problem.

2 Isolation

It isn't simply spending time alone. Do they seem detached? Do they find it hard to be fully themselves without fear of judgment, shame or ridicule? We can feel isolated even in a crowded room.

3 A shift in belief

When someone begins to believe the world is no good, that they will only ever feel pain, that they are a burden and everyone would be better off without them, or that they are unworthy of love.

Use it in everyday life

- Have regular, comfortable conversations about the three factors.
- Check in with yourself and the people around you.
- If you notice all three, slow down, offer stability and remind them they are loved.

> **Remember:** even if the problem someone is fixating on seems small, their distress is not.

What reduces the risk?

Meaning, connection and contribution. See the companion guide.

Adapted from Dr. Thomas Joiner's Interpersonal Theory of Suicide, shared in Jenny Thrasher's own words.

Need help now? If you or someone you know is thinking about suicide, call or text 988 (US) or text HOME to 741741. If someone is in immediate danger, call 911.

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