



# Rob's Story

The story of Rob's life is unique. The story of his death is unfortunately far too common. Rob Kavovit was a healthy, successful 45 year old man when he took his own life on March 16, 2021. Rob had a beautiful wife and two amazing young boys, eight & ten years old as well as a large family. Rob had a lot to be grateful for and he was. As much as lacrosse was a part of who Rob was, he was a proud and devoted Husband & Father, Son, Brother, Godfather, Uncle, Coach, Co-worker, Neighbor and Friend. He was known for being gentle, warm, even tempered, reliable, kind, smart, innovative, creative, fun and most notably all about family - *all of the time*. Rob was a generous man beloved by all who crossed paths with him. Although he would never have claimed that he was a perfectionist, most things in his life to those from the outside looking in, seemed perfect. Rob enjoyed a successful career in lacrosse as an All-American State Champion at Yorktown High School in New York and as an All-American National Champion at Syracuse University where he captained both teams. He, like many athletes, strived to be the best. He is a legend for his accomplishments in lacrosse but it was the strong character Rob carried on and off the field about which the stories are told. There was no lead up to Rob's suicide, no dramatic struggle with drugs, alcohol or known ongoing battles with depression. The people closest to him never suspected that there was a silent and ultimately life threatening depression brewing. He never missed a day out of life. He never ignored his responsibilities. Rob had a lot going on in his daily life, he was working as a Physical Therapist, coaching his boys in youth lacrosse and coaching the Jensen Beach High School Lacrosse team in Florida where loved the beaches and boating. We now know Rob suffered his depression in silence. That silent depression led to Rob taking his own life. The silence must end. The dialogue must open. The shame must shed. Again, Rob's life story was unique, the story of his death...is not. It's a story far too many other families share but that many also don't talk about. That stigma only perpetuates the problem. People are often stunned when they learn about Rob's suicide because there is an idea that depression is messy. Rob's story isn't that story. Rob was another unsuspecting victim to silent depression...one we could never imagine. 15 For Life ~ It's Understanding You!

“He was just the perfect teammate. His lack of wanting self-attention made him the most underrated and unassuming superstar Syracuse has ever had. He was a beautiful soul.”

- Paul Carcaterra (ESPN Analyst Syracuse National Champion /Yorktown All-American)

## Mission Statement

In Rob's honor, his family lit and will carry the torch of the 15 For Life Foundation to shed the shame around depression and mental health. By opening dialogue in a fresh and honest way, 15 For Life's mission is to better equip people of all ages to understand and recognize depression and mental illness potentially affecting themselves, family and/or friends. 15 For Life...It's Understanding You!

## Resources

National Suicide Prevention

Lifeline at: **800-273-8255** OR Crisis

Text Line : Text **HELLO** to **741741**

SUICIDE HOTLINE	<a href="https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org">https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org</a>
NAMI	<a href="https://nami.org/Home">https://nami.org/Home</a>
SAVE	<a href="https://save.org">https://save.org</a>
NIMH	<a href="http://nimh.nih.gov">nimh.nih.gov</a>



[www.15ForLife.org](http://www.15ForLife.org)

Twitter~ [15forlifeorg](https://twitter.com/15forlifeorg)

Facebook~ [15forlifefoundation](https://www.facebook.com/15forlifefoundation)

Instagram~ [15forlife\\_foundation](https://www.instagram.com/15forlife_foundation)

# Common WARNING SIGNS of Mental Illness

Diagnosing mental illness isn't a straightforward science. We can't test for it the same way we can test blood sugar levels for diabetes. Each condition has its own set of unique symptoms, though symptoms often overlap. Common signs and/or symptoms can include:

- Feeling very sad or withdrawn for more than two weeks
- Trying to harm or end one's life or making plans to do so
- Severe, out-of-control, risk-taking behavior that causes harm to self or others
- Sudden overwhelming fear for no reason, sometimes with a racing heart, physical discomfort or difficulty breathing
- Significant weight loss or gain
- Seeing, hearing or believing things that aren't real\*
- Excessive use of alcohol or drugs
- Drastic changes in mood, behavior, personality or sleeping habits
- Extreme difficulty concentrating or staying still
- Intense worries or fears that get in the way of daily activities



\*Various communities and backgrounds might view this sign differently based on their beliefs and experiences. Some people within these communities and cultures may not interpret hearing voices as unusual.

## WORRIED ABOUT YOURSELF OR SOMEONE YOU CARE ABOUT?

- If you notice any of these symptoms, it's important to ask questions
- Try to understand what they're experiencing and how their daily life is impacted
- Making this connection is often the first step to getting treatment

50% of all lifetime mental illness begins by age 14

## KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

- Talk with a health care professional
- Learn more about mental illness
- Take a mental health education class
- Call the NAMI HelpLine at 800-950-NAMI (6264)

75% by age 24

Data from CDC, NIMH and other select sources. Find citations for this resource at [nami.org/mhstats](http://nami.org/mhstats)

NAMI HelpLine 800-950-NAMI (6264) | NAMI | NAMICommunicate | NAMICommunicate | www.nami.org | National Alliance on Mental Illness



# You are NOT ALONE

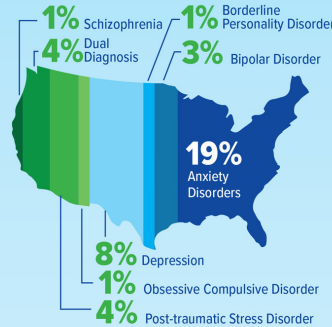
Millions of people are affected by mental illness each year. Across the country, many people just like you work, perform, create, compete, laugh, love and inspire every day.

1 in 5 U.S. adults experience mental illness

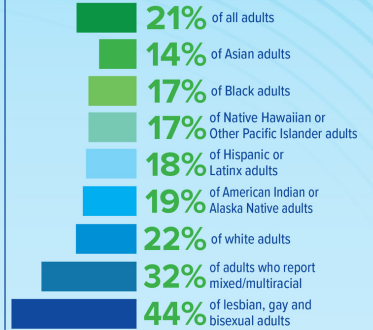
1 in 20 U.S. adults experience serious mental illness

17% of youth (6-17 years) experience a mental health disorder

## 12 MONTH PREVALENCE OF COMMON MENTAL ILLNESSES (ALL U.S. ADULTS)



## 12 MONTH PREVALENCE OF ANY MENTAL ILLNESS (ALL U.S. ADULTS)



## WAYS TO REACH OUT AND GET HELP

- Talk with a health care professional
- Call the NAMI HelpLine at 800-950-NAMI (6264)
- Connect with friends and family
- Join a support group

Data from CDC, NIMH and other select sources. Find citations for this resource at [nami.org/mhstats](http://nami.org/mhstats)

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[www.15ForLife.org](http://www.15ForLife.org)

# The RIPPLE EFFECT of Mental Illness

Having a mental illness can make it challenging to live everyday life and maintain recovery. Let's look at some of the ways mental illness can impact lives — and how the impact can ripple out.

**PERSON**

- People with serious mental illness have an increased risk for chronic disease, like diabetes or cancer
- 18% of U.S. adults with mental illness also have a substance use disorder
- Rates of cardiometabolic disease are twice as high in adults with serious mental illness

**FAMILY**

- At least 8.4 million Americans provide care to an adult with an emotional or mental illness
- Caregivers spend an average of 32 hours per week providing unpaid care

**COMMUNITY**

- 21% of people experiencing homelessness also have a serious mental illness
- 37% of people incarcerated in state and federal prison have a diagnosed mental condition
- 70% of youth in the juvenile justice system have at least one mental health condition
- 1 in 8 of all visits to U.S. emergency departments are related to mental and substance use disorders

**WORLD**

- Depression is a leading cause of disability worldwide
- Depression and anxiety disorders cost the global economy \$1 trillion each year in lost productivity

# It's Okay to Talk About SUICIDE

Thoughts of giving up and suicide can be frightening. Not taking these kinds of thoughts seriously can have devastating outcomes.

Suicide is NOT the answer.

- 2<sup>nd</sup> Suicide is the 2<sup>nd</sup> leading cause of death for people ages 10-34
- 46% of people who die by suicide have a diagnosed mental health condition
- The overall suicide rate has increased 35% since 1999
- 90% of people who die by suicide have experienced symptoms of a mental health condition
- Suicide is the 10<sup>th</sup> leading cause of death in the U.S.

If you start thinking about suicide, seek help. Call or text a crisis line or a trusted friend.

Make an appointment with a health care professional to talk about what you're thinking or how you're feeling.

## HIGH RISK POPULATIONS

- 78% of all people who die by suicide are male
- 4x Lesbian, gay and bisexual youth are four times more likely to attempt suicide than straight youth
- Transgender people are 12 times more likely to attempt suicide than the general population
- 12x

If you are concerned about suicide and don't know what to do, call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255.

Suicidal thoughts are a symptom, just like any other — they can be treated, and they can improve over time.

Data from CDC, NIMH and other select sources. Find citations for this resource at [nami.org/mhstats](http://nami.org/mhstats)

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