

# Suicide: A public health concern

## Why is Suicide Prevention a public health issue?



Suicide impacts families, communities, and societies, not just individuals.



Response services are critical in preventing harm to those who are suicidal or those who have survived a suicide attempt, but do not prevent suicidal thoughts or attempts from occurring.



50% of suicides in India are not attributable to any mental illness. Data shows that marginalisation due to complex psychosocial factors such as gender, caste, disability, sexual orientation, social location, etc. can lead to vulnerability.

## What will a public health approach to suicide entail?

A public health approach to suicide prevention focuses on addressing social determinants of suicide, reducing risk factors, and enhancing protective factors through multi-sectoral collaborations.

It creates an opportunity to involve all stake-holders such as survivors, healthcare systems, community organizations, educators, policy makers, and traditional healers, and work towards suicide prevention in a cost-effective manner.

Evidence-based instances of public health responses to suicide prevention:

Controlling sale & storage of pesticides has been found to lower pesticide-related suicide attempts in Sri Lanka

Introduction of supplementary board exams that can be taken in the same year if students have been unable to pass in the first attempt. This halved the student suicide rates in Tamil Nadu, India.

The five levels of a public health approach are:



**Individual** (e.g., enhancing problem-solving skills)



**Relationship** (e.g., sensitizing loved ones)



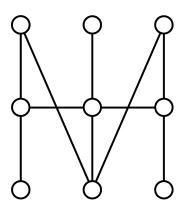
**Community** (e.g., restricting access to means of suicide such as pesticides)



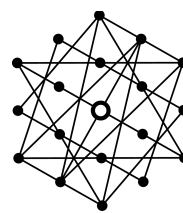
**Societal** (e.g., Debt waiver and relief schemes for farmers)



**Systemic** (e.g., creation of a National Suicide Prevention Strategy)



mariwala  
health  
initiative



Alliance  
for Suicide  
Prevention