

Senior Services Division

Suicide Prevention in Older Adults



This report is intended to identify and understand public health issues affecting older adults age 60+ living in Davis County. The goal of this report is to increase awareness of these conditions and their impact on individuals and communities, identify groups most affected by these issues, and establish strategies for improvement.

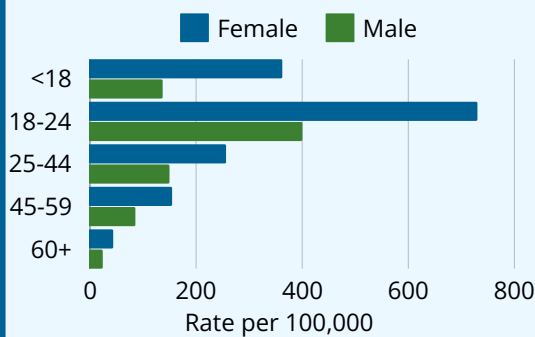
Overview of Suicide Prevention

Suicide and suicidal behaviors are serious public health issues, both locally and nationally. Suicide not only effects individuals, but families, workplaces, places of worship, and entire communities. Suicidal behavior is a complex issue that takes an enormous toll on communities with both economic and human costs.

Fortunately, suicide is preventable. More guidance and behavioral health resources are available than in the past. Local and state leaders, public health partners, and community members are more committed to focusing on suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention.

Data: [DCHD CHA, 2023](#); [CDC, 2023](#)

Rate of Suicide Related Emergency Department (ED) Visits in Davis County by Age Group and Sex (2018 - 2022)

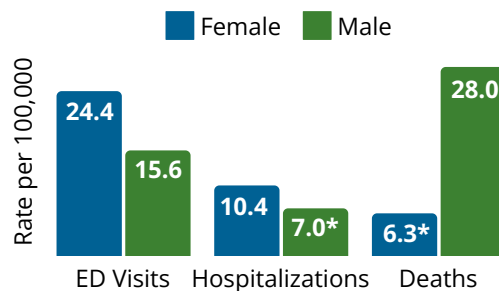


Data: [IBIS, 2018 - 2022 \(crude\)](#); [CDC WONDER, 2022 \(crude\)](#)

Suicide affects people of all ages. It was the 9th leading cause of death in Davis County in 2022. Davis County adults age 60+ have fewer suicide related Emergency Department (ED) visits than other age groups. However, suicide is a complex issue and older adults still experience life crises, which is a common life stressor for those experiencing suicidal behaviors in Utah. Life crises may include anything that an individual views as a crisis, including loss of finances, relationship problems, or changes in health status, to name a few.

Among adults age 60+ living in Davis County, women have higher rates of suicidal behaviors but have lower rates of suicide death. This finding is consistent across all age groups and highlights a serious area for improvement. The data suggests that men may not be seeking out or receiving essential mental health care. This difference may also be due to men choosing more lethal suicide methods, such as firearms. Safely storing firearms and medications, especially when experiencing a mental health crisis, may help prevent many deaths by suicide.

Rate of Suicide ED Visits, Hospitalizations, & Deaths Among Davis County Adults Age 60+ (2018 - 2022)



*Caution interpreting unreliable sample size

Data: [IBIS, 2018 - 2022 \(crude\)](#)

Protective and Risk Factors for Suicide

Protective

- Positive social connections
- Skills in problem solving, conflict resolution, and handling of disputes
- Receiving effective mental health care
- Restricted access to highly lethal means of suicide, such as guns or pills
- Cultural and religious beliefs that discourage suicide

Risk

- Family history of suicide
- Child maltreatment, abuse, neglect
- Unwillingness to seek help
- Previous suicide attempt
- Mental illness, especially if untreated
- Alcohol or substance use
- Physical illness or chronic pain
- Social isolation

Data: [DCHD CHA, 2023](#)



Key Findings

5th

Davis County has the 5th highest suicide rate among those 60+ in Utah when compared to other counties ²

Roughly 4 out of 5 older adults who die by suicide in Davis County are men ⁷

39%

39% of U.S. LGBTQ+ older adults have experienced suicidal ideation, which is 2 to 3 times higher than the general older adult population ⁸

70

An average of 70 Utah older adults die from suicide each year ⁹

71%

71% of U.S. transgender older adults report a history of suicidal ideation ⁸

Current Progress and Strategies for Improvement

Behavioral Health Initiatives in Senior Activity Centers

The Senior Services Division has created a Four-Year Strategic Plan, which details the activities and programs we continue to implement to better serve older adults living in Davis County. As part of our Four-Year Plan, we have included several activities regarding mental health and suicide prevention. These activities share a goal of screening Center participants for suicide risk.

In 2023, the Senior Services Division began a partnership with Davis Behavioral Health, allowing mental health professionals to visit one of our Senior Activity Centers every month. This mental health professional provides education and holds discussions on a range of mental health topics, including managing stress, anxiety, and dealing with grief. They also provide referrals for additional care and services when needed.

All Senior Activity Center staff have received QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer) training, which is an emergency mental health intervention used to prevent suicide. Staff have learned the warning signs of suicide, how to ask questions to assess the situation, persuade the person to accept help, and refer the person to a professional for help to get them through the crisis.

Behavioral health resource directories have been made available in all Senior Activity Centers for anyone to take a copy. These directories were created in 2022 by the Davis County Health Department to gather available mental health resources into one document, making it easier for the community to access the resources they may need.

Community Health Improvement Plan

Davis County Health Department's 2024-2028 Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) describes some of the top health concerns for the county and how we are addressing them. The health issue with the biggest public concern was found to be mental health and suicide, making it the primary focus of the CHIP.

The Senior Services Division continues to work toward the goals and objectives laid out throughout the CHIP, including:

- Strengthening supports for mental, emotional, and social well-being
 - Increase skills to navigate life's challenges
 - Reduce stigma by normalizing and promoting help-seeking, hope, and recovery in the community
 - Improve access to relevant services, programs, and care for mental, emotional, and social well-being
- Improving access to resources and services

These goals and objectives align with the Four-Year Strategic Plan activities that we have already been implementing. We have helped improve older adults' access to mental health services and formed community collaborations by partnering with Davis Behavioral Health and providing behavioral health directories. Accessing these resources could potentially increase their ability to navigate life's challenges and improve their mental well-being. The Senior Services Division also provides Behavior Health Directories in all Senior Activity Centers, which details support groups, hospitals, and counseling opportunities throughout the County for those who may need them. The Senior Services Division will continue working toward these CHIP goals by expanding our reach within the older adult community over the coming years.

Local Resources		
988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline	988lifeline.org/	Call or text 988
Davis Behavioral Health	Dbh.utah.org/	801-773-7060
Davis County Health Department Suicide Prevention	Daviscountyutah.gov/health/community-health-services-division/community-health-division/suicide-prevention	N/A
Live On Utah	Liveonutah.org	N/A
Suicide Prevention and Ministering, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints	Churchofjesuschrist.org/get-help/suicide	N/A
SAMHSA's National Helpline (Treatment Referral Routing Service)	Findtreatment.gov	N/A
Veterans Crisis Line	Veteranscrisisline.net	Call 988 then press 1

1. CDC Facts about Suicide. 2023. Accessed April 23, 2024. ([View](#))
2. CDC WONDER. 2018-2022. Accessed April 24, 2024. ([View](#))
3. Davis County Health Department Community Health Assessment. 2023. Accessed April 23, 2024. ([View](#))
4. Davis County Health Department LGBTQ+ Population Health Report. 2023. ([View](#))

5. IBIS Injury ED. 2018-2022. Accessed April 23, 2024. ([View](#))
6. IBIS Injury Inpatient. 2018-2022. Accessed April 23, 2024. ([View](#))
7. IBIS Injury Mortality. 2018-2022. Accessed April 23, 2024. ([View](#))
8. SAGE. 2023. Accessed April 4, 2024. ([View](#))
9. Suicide in Utah. 2017-2020. Accessed April 4, 2024. ([View](#))