

# Why People Die By Suicide

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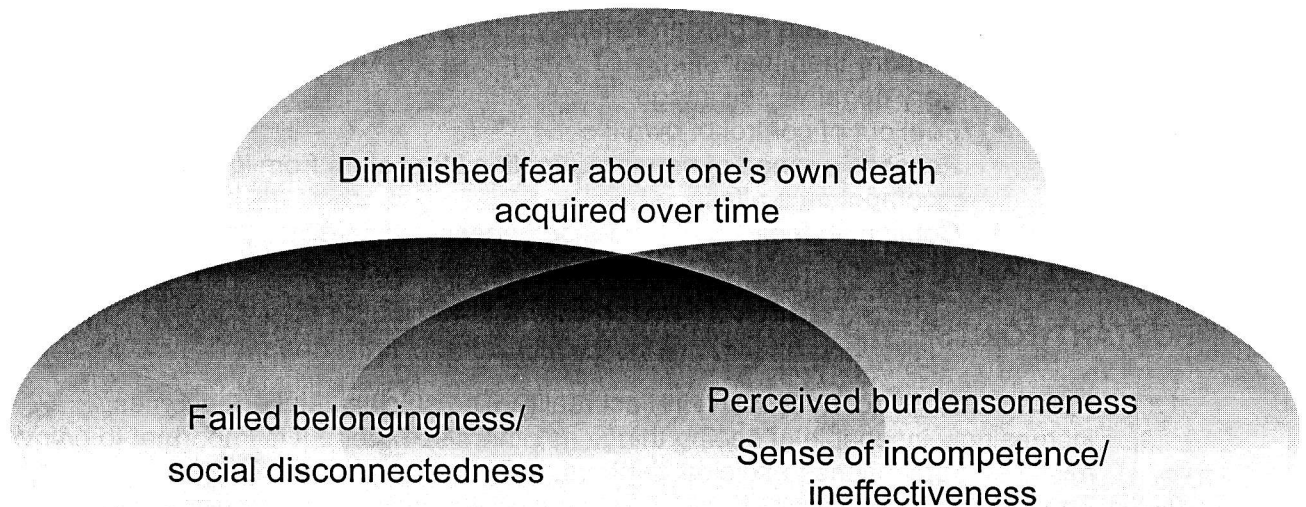
## Two Fundamental Human Needs

1. Affiliation or sense of belongingness
  - The sense that we are connected to others
2. Effectiveness or sense of competence
  - The sense that we are positive contributors to our world (families, communities, relationships)

The need to belong and contribute in some way to society seems to be an essential part of what it means to be human. Connectedness and effectiveness are essential to the will to live. When these needs are perceived to be going unmet, the will to live may begin to deteriorate.

## THREE COMPONENTS OF COMPLETED SUICIDE

People die by suicide because they have both the ability and the desire to do so.



1. Diminished fear about one's own death
  - Necessary for serious suicidal behavior to occur. Everyone who dies by suicide has to work up to the act, over long or short term.
  - Suicide victims have developed a sense of fearlessness of injury, pain and death through a process called "habituation" – "getting used to something."

- Getting used to pain, injury and the idea of death – becoming fearless/losing natural inhibitions about it- is a prerequisite to serious suicidal behavior.
- Repeated painful experiences with pain & suffering lay groundwork for the ability to enact suicide ie: childhood physical and sexual abuse, history of painful injuries, self injury (cutting), physician suicide rate – The more something painful is experienced, the more comfortable a person becomes with it – fear of pain is diminished and the main barrier to suicide erodes.
  - The more times a person attempts suicide, the more serious and dangerous their attempts become. Previous experiences have diminished their fear of causing their own death.
2. Failed belongingness/social disconnectedness
    - The perception that one does not belong, the feeling that one is alienated from others and not an integral part of a family, circle of friends or other valued group
      - Isolation, withdrawal
  3. Perceived burdensomeness/sense of incompetence/ineffectiveness
    - The perception that one's existence is not of value, that one contributes so little that they are a burden to family, friends and society, that one's death is worth more than their life.
      - Very negative self image
      - Feel out of control of own life
      - Possess a range of negative emotions that stem from idea that incompetence affects others
      - Continuing feelings of burdensomeness escalate into deep shame

## IMPORTANT POINTS

1. Perceptions do not necessarily reflect reality. The suicidal thinker becomes increasingly incapable of seeing things as others see them. It is important to point out mistaken perceptions to suicidal thinkers.
2. The need to belong is SO POWERFUL that when satisfied, it can prevent suicide even when other components are in place. CONNECTION PREVENTS SUICIDE. When asked about likelihood of suicide, many depressed patients respond that their connection to a loved one makes it impossible.
3. We can reduce the likelihood that people will act on suicidal thoughts if we lessen their anguish.