

2025 MESA COUNTY SUICIDE REPORT

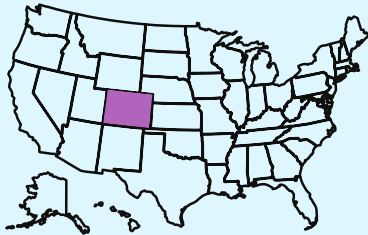
Prepared by Mesa County Public Health and Mesa County Suicide Prevention Coalition
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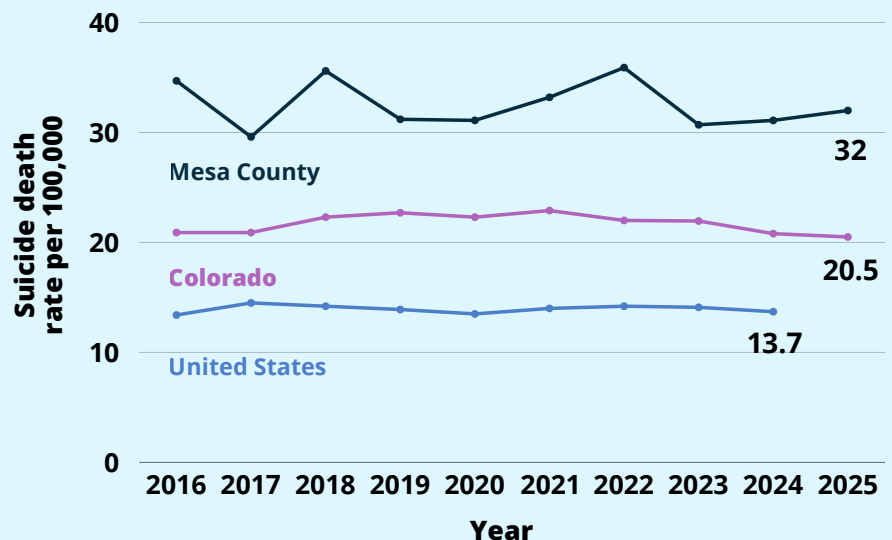
**MESA COUNTY
PUBLIC HEALTH**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Suicide is a complex public health issue with a disproportionately high rate that is deeply felt at the local level. Mesa County Public Health (MCPH), in partnership with the Mesa County Suicide Prevention Coalition is committed to researching and implementing vital prevention strategies that strengthen resiliency in our community.



Rate of suicide deaths per 100,000 in Mesa County, Colorado, and the United States (2016-2025)



Key Findings

Definitions

Suicide death: a death caused by injuring oneself with the intent to die.

Suicide attempt: harming oneself with intent to end their life but they do not die as a result of their actions.

Suicidal ideation: thinking about, considering, or planning suicide.

Age

Suicide deaths remain highest among working age adults, a long-standing trend. However, youth and young adults ages 10-24 make up over a third of all suicide-related emergency department related visits, even though they account for less than a fifth of the population. Suicide is the second leading cause of death among local youth.

Means

Firearms remain the primary method in local suicide deaths, consistently involved in more than half of cases in recent years. Conversely, substance involvement at the time of death has significantly decreased over the last two years.

Stressors

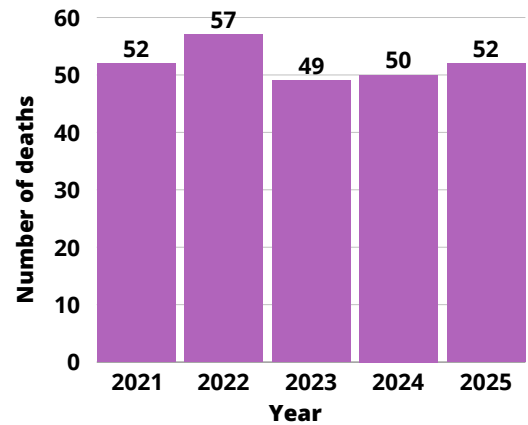
Access to mental health care in Mesa County remains severely limited. Following the loss of critical behavioral health resources, such as West Springs Hospital, the community experienced a sharp rise in suicide-related emergency department visits. On a hopeful note, local youth report a stronger sense of belonging and a corresponding decrease in suicidal despair.

DEATHS BY SUICIDE

Over the last ten years, an average of 50 Mesa County residents have died by suicide each year. This equates to a rate of about 31.9 per 100,000 residents, significantly higher than the statewide rate of 21.1 and the national rate of 13.9. **Suicide is the 7th leading cause of death in Mesa County**, and the 4th leading cause among residents under 65.

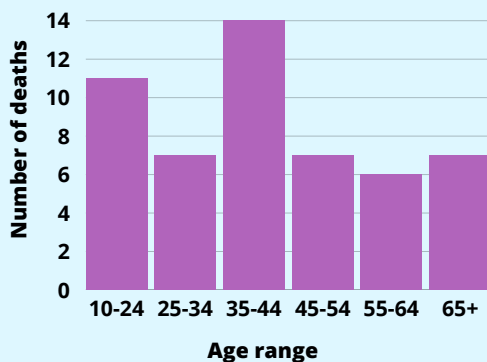
In Mesa County, as in Colorado and the U.S., men account for most suicide deaths. In 2025, the suicide fatality rate among men was over three times higher than among women. For decades, men's suicide rate has been **three to four times** that of women, primarily due to their use of more lethal means like firearms.

Mesa County suicide deaths

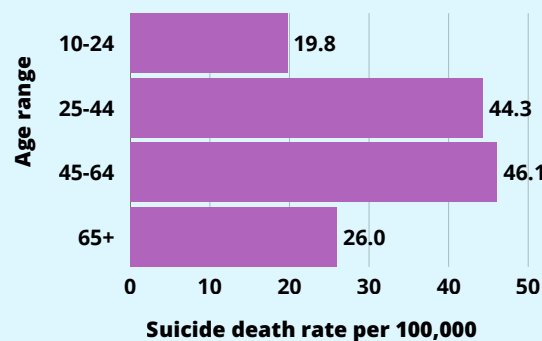


75% of deaths were male

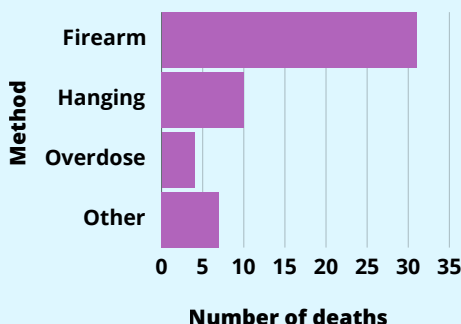
Suicide deaths by age 2025



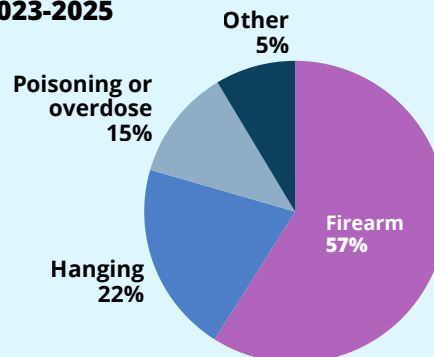
Suicide death by age, rate per 100,000 in Mesa County 2023-2025



Suicide death by method 2025



Method trends 2023-2025



In 2025, **over half** of all suicide deaths in the county involved a firearm. The lethality of firearms makes intervention more difficult, particularly compared to other methods such as overdose or poisoning.

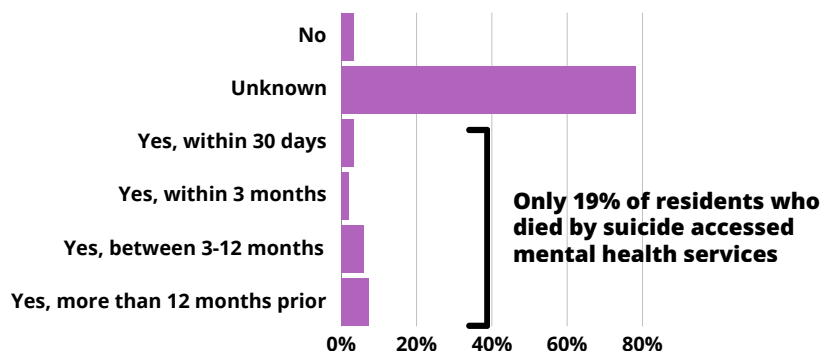
Suicide deaths remain **highest among working-aged adults**. However, there has been a spike in deaths among youth and young adults in recent years.

DEATHS BY SUICIDE

Mental Health Concerns

Mental health concerns are some of the most frequently cited stressors on suicide death reports. From 2022 to 2024, 50% of those who died had a currently diagnosed mental health concern. By comparison, only 19% were known to have ever accessed mental health services, and only 11% within the past year.

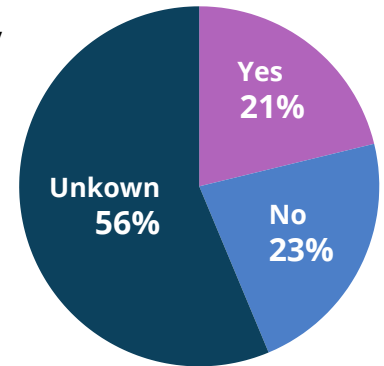
Access to mental health services 2023-2025



Previous suicide attempt 2023-2025

Reported by family or friend, may be an underestimate

Source: Mesa County Coroner's Office



Top 5 stressors 2022-2025

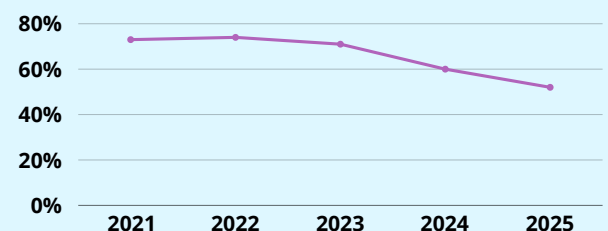
- History of mental health problem
- Crisis two weeks prior to death
- Intimate partner problem
- History of substance misuse
- Physical health problem

Substance Use

A history of substance misuse, including patterns of problematic drug or alcohol use, is also frequently documented in suicide deaths. Between 2022 and 2024, 29% of those who died had a history of problems with alcohol and 12% had problems with other substances.

Suicide crisis also frequently appears in the context of compounding hardship. Individuals who died by suicide were experiencing an average of **2.8 adverse circumstances** prior to death, such as relationship conflict, financial strain, or chronic health concerns.

Drug or alcohol involvement at time of death 2021-2025



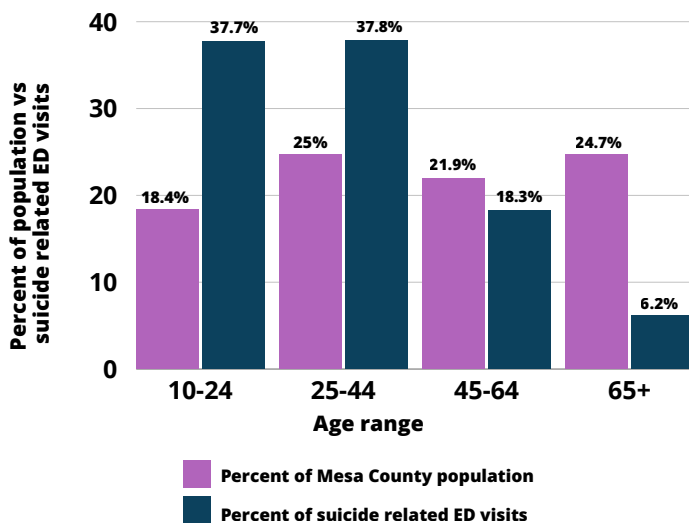
29% known history of problem with alcohol

12% known history of problem with substance other than alcohol

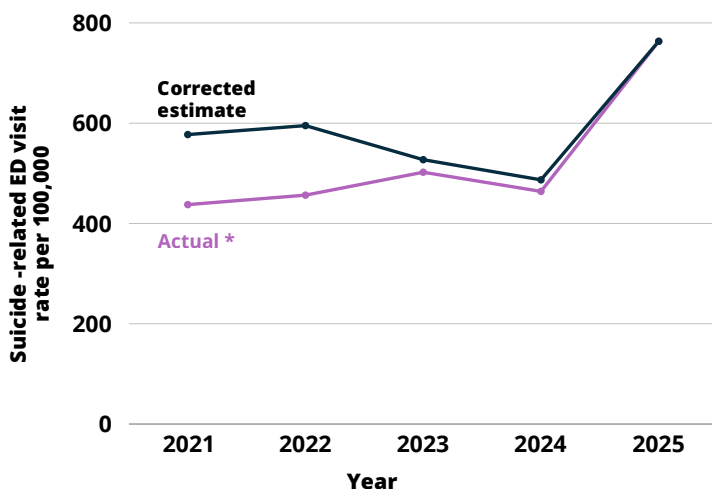
SUICIDE ATTEMPTS

For each suicide death in Mesa County, another **15** people make a suicide attempt and survive, and another **150** experience ideation without making an attempt, based on recent self-reported data. These estimates suggest roughly **8,000** residents experience suicidal ideation each year.

Disproportionate representation by age in suicide-related emergency department (ED) visits in Mesa County, 2025

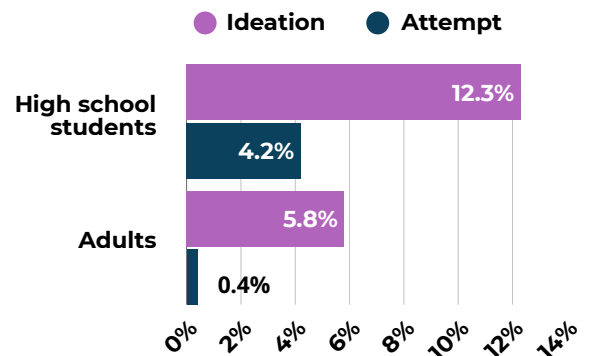


Rate of suicide-related ED visits per 100,000 people, Mesa County 2021-2025



*Not all local hospitals started reporting data until 2024. The corrected estimate shows our calculation for what the rate likely was based on the actual data available at the time.

Self-reported suicide attempt and ideation in Mesa County 2023-2025



Source: Healthy Kids Colorado Survey, Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System

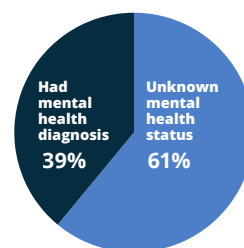
Emergency Department (ED) Data

In 2025, there were **1,241 suicide-related ED visits** across three major hospitals: St. Mary's Medical Center, Community Hospital, and Family Health West. These visits reflect a subset of individuals whose distress rose to the level of needing acute medical intervention.

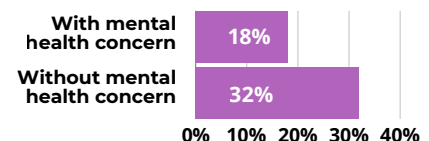
The rate increase in 2025 can be attributed to the **West Springs Hospital closure**. The spike occurred in March 2025 and remained heightened for the rest of the year.

Based on self-reported ideation rates, about **one in seven** people experiencing suicidal ideation received emergency care at a local hospital.

Suicide-related ED visits with co-occurring mental health diagnosis 2025



Substance involvement in suicide-related ED visits by presence of mental health concern 2025



56% of ED visits were made by females

DISPARITIES IN SUICIDE



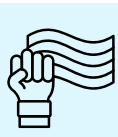
Youth & Young Adults

Youth and young adults ages 10–24 are disproportionately represented in suicide-related ED visits. While they make up less than one-fifth of the county population, they account for **more than a third of suicide-related ED visits**. Although their suicide death rate is lower than other age groups, **suicide remains the second leading cause of death** among Mesa County youth. Among this age group, there is a pronounced difference by sex: females account for two-thirds of suicide-related ED visits. Ages 10–24 are grouped to match suicide-related ED and mortality comparison metrics. The single-year number of suicide deaths is small enough to be identifiable and not statistically reliable. While most deaths occur among young adults ages 19–24, other indicators highlight significant distress among youth ages 10–18.



Working-Age Adults

While working-age men and women are fairly equally represented in suicide-related ED visits with women making up just over half, **men are far more likely to die by suicide**. One contributing factor is method: men are nearly **twice as likely to use a firearm**, which has a much higher lethality rate and leaves less opportunity for intervention.



LGBTQ+ Community

LGBTQ+ youth and adults experience disproportionately high rates of suicidal ideation and attempts. Although they represent a relatively small share of the population—roughly 6% of adults and 19% of youth—they carry a significant portion of the community's overall suicide burden.

According to the 2025 Colorado Health Access Survey (CHAS), **nearly half of LGBTQ+ Coloradans (43%) reported poor mental health**, compared to one-fifth of straight and cisgender Coloradans. The survey also identified higher rates of unfair treatment by medical professionals among LGBTQ+ individuals.

Local youth data reflect similar disparities. In 2025, just 3% of heterosexual, cisgender students in Mesa County reported having made a suicide attempt, compared to 9% of LGB cisgender students and 18% of transgender and nonbinary students.



Veterans

Veterans are overrepresented in suicide deaths, both nationally and locally. In Mesa County, veterans make up 10% of the adult population but **accounted for 18% of all suicide deaths** over the past decade.

PREVENTION IN ACTION

Suicide prevention is a community-driven priority in Mesa County. Efforts are established and guided by the **Mesa County Suicide Prevention Coalition**. Participants are from a multitude of sectors including healthcare, law enforcement, and education. The collaborative structure ensures that prevention initiatives remain inclusive and tailored to the needs of our residents.

The Coalition's efforts align with the **Six Pillars of Suicide Prevention**, an evidence-informed framework developed by the Colorado National Collaborative. Each pillar represents a critical focus area where targeted, collaborative action can reduce suicide risk and reinforce a more connected, resilient community.

THE SIX PILLARS OF SUICIDE PREVENTION



CONNECTEDNESS



**ECONOMIC STABILITY
& SUPPORTS**



**EDUCATION
& AWARENESS**



**ACCESS TO SAFER
SUICIDE CARE**



**LETHAL MEANS
SAFETY**



POSTVENTION

Prevention efforts

Grand Valley Connects is an enhanced resource navigation program that **assists community members with complex needs**.

Gun shops and pawn shops participate in Colorado's Gun Shop Project, **providing information about suicide risk and distributing gun locks to encourage safe storage** of firearms.

The Behavioral Health Steering Committee **works to address gaps in our mental health care system**.

Mesa County Opioid Response Group partners **provide community trainings and substance abuse recovery support**.

Find the Right Fit is one-stop resource where people can **explore local mental health services and find the care that fits them best**.

Veteran Programs in Mesa County foster **connection and economic stability**.

Mesa County Libraries **host events related to mental health, grief, and resilience**. Partners include HopeWest and Hilltop.

The Colorado National Monument provides opportunities to increase resiliency and wellness through **educational outreach and programming**.

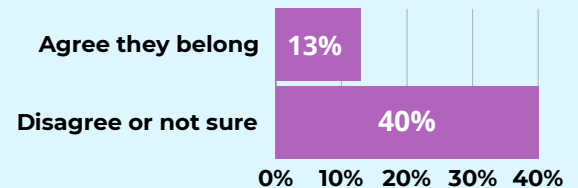
PREVENTION IN ACTION

Community Connection

In Mesa County, **73% of high school students** feel like they belong at their school, and **39% of adults** feel close to people in the area where they live. These numbers indicate a significant portion of residents who, at best, feel uncertain whether they belong. This is similar to statewide trends. The **Colorado Belonging Barometer** reports that only about half of Coloradans (53%) experience belonging in their local communities.

In response to these challenges, there are numerous initiatives actively working to cultivate and reinforce connectedness in Mesa County. The Coalition supports **Sources of Strength** peer networks in School District 51 middle and high schools, aligning with the district's strategic priority to promote student belonging. This program is the first universal intervention shown to reduce suicide mortality among youth.

Students with serious mental health challenges by sense of belonging



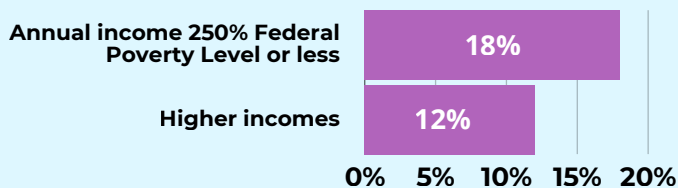
Source: Healthy Kids Colorado Survey, 2025



29% reduction in new attempts

Sources of Strength is the first universal intervention shown to reduce youth suicide mortality.

Prevalence of persistent mental distress by income (among all Coloradans)



Source: Colorado Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 2024

Local Resources

One in three Mesa County households is cost-burdened, paying over 30% of income on housing. Approximately 20% of residents are highly socially vulnerable according to Census Community Resilience Estimates. These estimates reflect factors like poverty, disability status, lack of health insurance, and communication barriers.

To assist community members with complex needs, Mesa County Public Health established Grand Valley Connects (GVC) in 2022. GVC is an **enhanced resource navigation program**. In 2025, **1,264** Mesa County residents accessed GVC, including **117 who connected with mental health resources**. The top needs identified were housing, food, and financial assistance.

Top areas of need



Housing



Food



Financial assistance

PREVENTION IN ACTION

Crisis services are another critical resource. Colorado Mental Health Line 988 offers 24/7 immediate support via phone, text, or chat for anyone in distress. Safe2Tell is an anonymous tool primarily for students to report anything concerning that might cause harm to themselves or others. **Both systems support early intervention and offer confidential, stigma-reducing ways to seek help.**

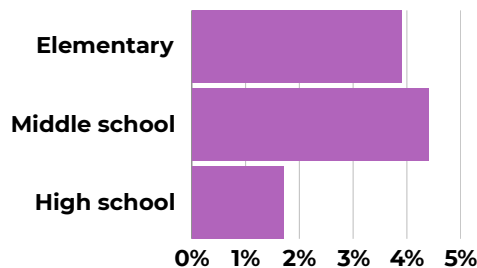
988 Colorado

 **2,434 calls**

 **244 texts**

made by Mesa County residents in 2025

Suicide Risk Screener prevalence by school level



2025-2026 School Year

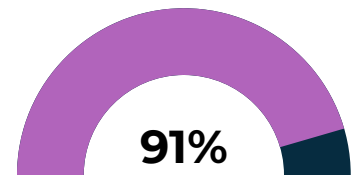
645 risk screeners completed by D51

529 Safe2Tell tips received, 1 in 3 related to suicide, self-harm, or depression

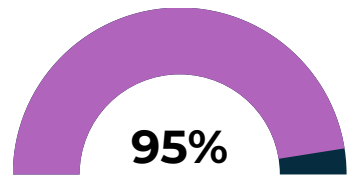
Education & Awareness

Suicide prevention is not limited to mental health experts. It is a mission anyone can support, and many people are willing to help. In a 2024 survey by Suicide Prevention Now, 91% of people said they believe suicide can be prevented, and 95% said they would take action if someone close to them were thinking about suicide.

Equipping community members with the knowledge and confidence to take action is a vital part of suicide prevention. The Mesa County Suicide Prevention Coalition offers a variety of free trainings to the community. These include brief one to two-hour sessions available online or in-person, as well as an in-depth, two-day in-person training.



People who believe suicide can be prevented



People who would take action if someone close to them was thinking about suicide.

14K

adults in Mesa County have participated in suicide prevention trainings from 2016-2025

PREVENTION IN ACTION

The Suicide Prevention Coalition, Veterans Affairs (VA) Western Colorado, and Mesa County Opioid Response Group work in close partnership to promote safety practices around firearms and medications. This includes distributing gun locks, supporting medication take-back programs, and providing safe storage training for both residents and clinicians.



**Gun locks distributed by VA
Western Colorado in 2025**

2,723 in Mesa County

5,724 across region

1,298

**pounds of disposed
medication through
take back sites in 2025**

86%

**of Mesa County's
firearm deaths were
suicide deaths from
2023 to 2025**

Postvention Support

Postvention is the response to and care for individuals and communities affected by a suicide attempt, crisis, or death. Examples include safe reporting and messaging about suicide by the media and affected organizations. It also includes caring follow up contacts after a suicide attempt or mental health crisis.

Current postvention efforts include options for both individual and collective care. The **Mesa County Coroner's Family Support Coordinator** provides direct outreach to residents recently impacted by suicide loss, offering compassionate communication, care packages, and referrals to bereavement support.

For those seeking longer-term connection and support, **Heartbeat Grand Junction** offers a local support group for survivors of suicide loss, as well as remembrance events that create space to honor loved ones and connect with others.



**Mesa County Coroner's Office
Postvention Support, 2025**

204 phone calls, texts,
and meetings

43 care packages sent



Photo credit: Larry Robinson, The Daily Sentinel

RESOURCES

If you or someone you know is in crisis, call 9-8-8 or reach out to Colorado Crisis Services at 1-844-493-TALK (8255).

Community Partners



Colorado
Mental Health
Line



Heartbeat GJ

Survivors After Suicide Loss

Data Sources

- American Foundation for Suicide Prevention
- Colorado Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS)
- Colorado Health Information Dataset (CoHID)
- ESSENCE hospital data
- Healthy Kids Colorado Survey, 2023-2025
- Mesa County Coroner's Office, Suicide Death Data
- Mesa County Community Health Needs Assessment, 2024-2026
- Mesa County Tell Us Survey, 2022
- School District 51, 2025

Previous Reports

View previous suicide reports on MCPH's Special Topic Reports webpage.



**MESA COUNTY
PUBLIC HEALTH**

 **SUICIDE PREVENTION**
MESA COUNTY 