Understanding Alcohol Use and Suicide

**Fact 1:** Globally, more than 700,000 people die by suicide every year. In the Americas, this figure is 97,339.

**Fact 2:** 77% of suicides in 2019 happened in low- and middle-income countries.

**Fact 3:** Suicide can affect people throughout their lifespan.

**Fact 4:** In the Americas, men account for 77% of all deaths from suicide.

**Fact 5:** Suicide attempts are about two to four times more frequent among women.

**Fact 6:** There are indications that for every adult who dies by suicide, there may have been 20 others attempting suicide.

Alcohol intoxication can cause changes to your feelings, mood, and decision-making, which can lead to a greater risk of suicide:

- **Unhappiness, Sadness, Melancholy**
- **Cognitive Impairment, Not Thinking Effectively**
- **Impulsive Behaviors or Acts**
- **Increased Suicidal Ideation**

**1.** People have about a seven times increased risk for a suicide attempt soon after drinking alcohol.

**2.** The risk of a suicide attempt further increases to 37 times after heavy use of alcohol.

**3.** The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that up to 18% of suicides globally are due to alcohol.

**4.** The risks of suicidal ideation, suicide attempts, and completed suicide are each increased by 2–3 times among those with AUD in comparison with the general population.

**5.** The COVID-19 pandemic has had widespread impacts on people’s mental health and exacerbated many of the known risk factors for suicide.

**Sources:**

**Drinking Less**

- Avoiding intoxication and drinking when you are not feeling well is the best way to reduce your risks of a suicide attempt. If you think you are drinking too much, seek help to assess your risks and choose the right intervention for you.

**Finding Help**

- Effective interventions to prevent suicide are available. Talk to a healthcare provider if you are thinking about suicide. On a personal level, early detection and treatment of depression and Alcohol Use Disorders (AUD), are critical to suicide prevention, as well as follow-up contact for psychosocial support.