



World Conference
on Drowning
Prevention
2011

Suicide by Drowning is the 21st century's rescue challenge

John Connolly

The Lifesaving Foundation



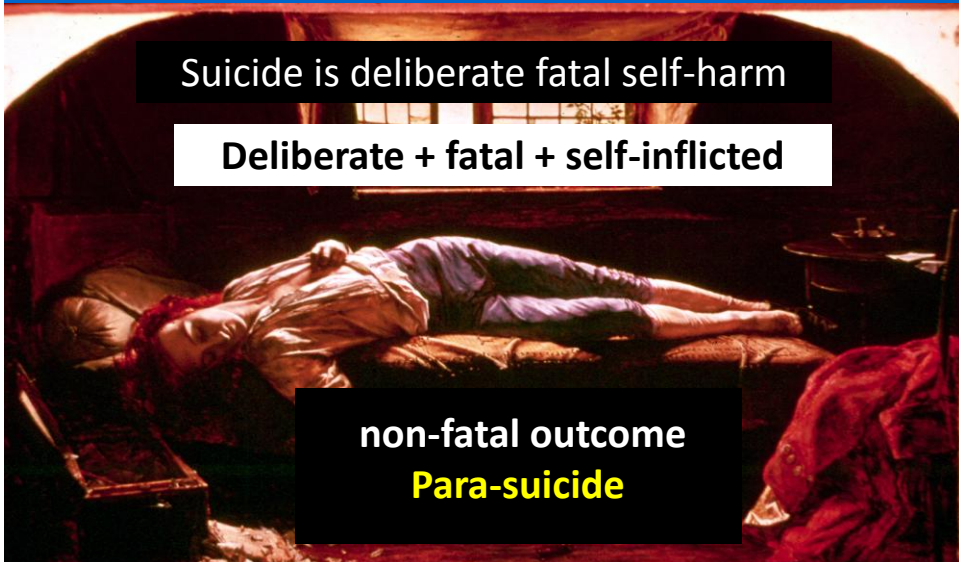
Definitions

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Suicide is deliberate fatal self-harm

Deliberate + fatal + self-inflicted

non-fatal outcome
Para-suicide

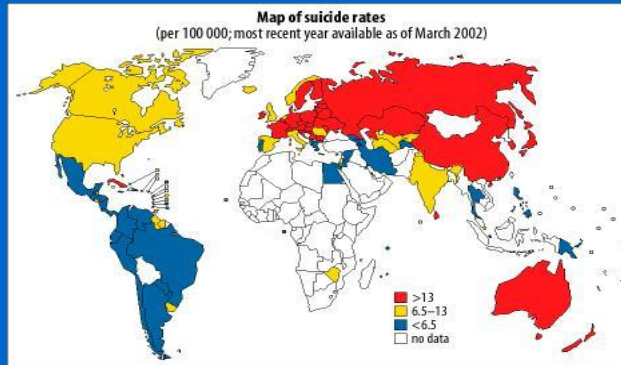




WHO

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1 million suicide deaths annually



20-30 million para-suicide deaths



Gender

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**More females attempt suicide than
males**

**More males successfully complete
suicide than females**

**Ready access to lethal means
usually determines the death
method chosen**



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Suicide by drowning



From less than 1% to over 25% of all suicides



Common Features of Suicide by Drowning

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At night between 10pm and 3am

Week-end

From a bridge over a river

A jump into deep water

Most likely a male

Aged between 15 yrs and 35 yrs

Very likely to have been drinking beforehand





Why a school teacher?

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Suicide Papers

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World Conferences

Amsterdam 2002 0 papers out of 125

Porto 2007 1 paper out of 156

Vietnam 2011 2 papers out of 282

3 conferences 3 papers out of 563



Drowning

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Drowning is the process
of experiencing respiratory impairment
from submersion/immersion in liquid.

Drowning is a process



Challenges

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1. Open acceptance of the problem
2. Analysis of national problems
3. Inclusion of suicidal drownings
in national drowning reports
4. Introduction of preventative
and rescue strategies



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We Can't

Reasons for doing nothing

1. We cannot stop them
2. They will only try again
3. We don't know enough about the problem
4. We don't have the resources
5. They will drown a rescuer



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We cannot stop them

Most people who attempt suicide are ambiguous about taking their own lives.

They want to end their suffering not their lives

Foyle Search and Rescue have stopped over 1000 suicides since 1993



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They will try again

Only between 3% and 15% of persons who survive a suicide attempt will go on to eventually kill themselves.

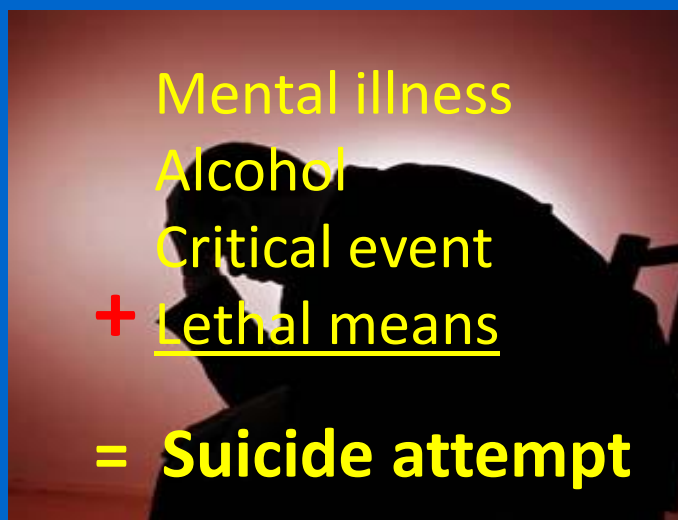
Acutely suicidal V **Chronically suicidal**

Only 3 out of 1000 persons prevented from killing themselves by Foyle Search and Rescue attempted again successfully afterwards



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Suicidal ?





AWARE

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‘ If a young man is depressed, goes on a binge drinking session and gets more depressed , he may become disinhibited enough to act suicidally, where he wouldn’t when sober. ’



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We don’t know enough about the problem

We don’t know enough about the problem

3 papers out of 563



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We don't have the resources

**We spend the resources
searching for their bodies**

Foyle Search and Rescue - PREVENT
Most river rescue services - RECOVER



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They will drown a rescuer

**I have no record of a rescuer being
drowned by a suicidal casualty.
I have many records of rescuers
drowning while attempting to
rescue accidental casualties**

**Most casualties are not physically capable
of resisting rescue**



Common Features of Suicide Locations

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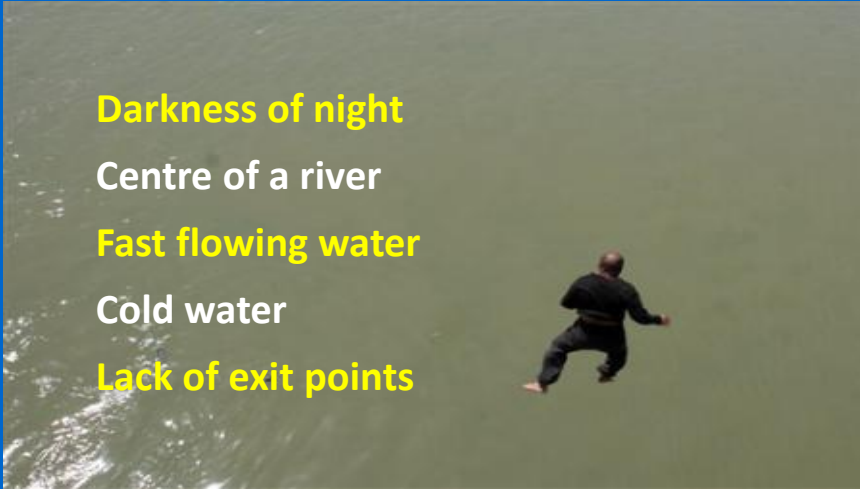
Darkness of night

Centre of a river

Fast flowing water

Cold water

Lack of exit points

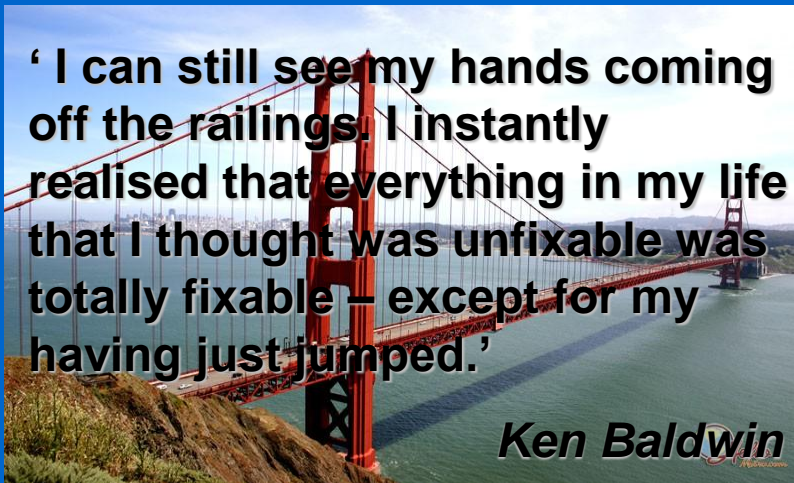


They change their minds

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‘ I can still see my hands coming off the railings. I instantly realised that everything in my life that I thought was unfixable was totally fixable – except for my having just jumped.’

Ken Baldwin





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