

In Vermont, approximately 120,000 adults live with a disability, and 10% of them have seriously considered attempting suicide in the past year, a rate five times higher than adults without a disability (2%).ⁱ

Who is more likely to have a disability and seriously consider suicide?

Adults with a disability between 25 and 44 are most likely to seriously consider suicide in the past 12 months (17%). This rate is similar to adults with a disability between 45 and 64 (11%), and statistically higher than those 65 and older (3%). Adults with a disability who have poor mental health are also significantly more likely to consider suicide compared to those with good mental health (23% vs. 6%).ⁱ The risk of considering suicide among those with a disability does not significantly differ by biological sex, marital status, education, or employment status. [See here](#) for more data.

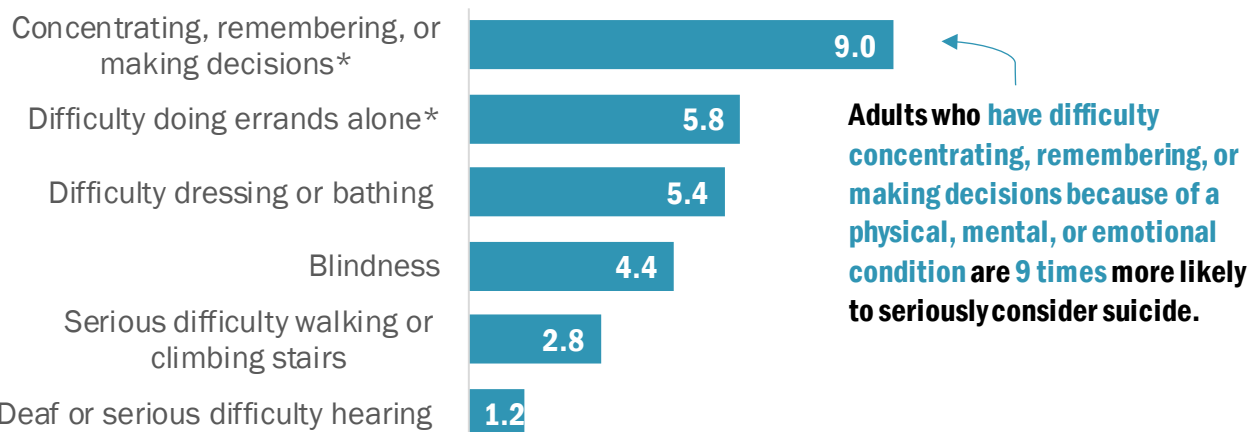
KEY POINTS

- **Adults with a disability ages 25 to 44 are most likely to consider suicide.**
- **Adults with a disability and poor mental health are more likely to consider suicide.**
- **There are differences in the risk of considering suicide by the type of disability. Those who have difficulty concentrating, remembering, or making decisions are most likely to consider suicide.**
- **Those with more disabilities have a greater chance of considering suicide.**

Which types of disabilities are more likely to seriously consider suicide?

The type of disability can influence the risk for seriously considering suicide. Of the 6 categories of disability in the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS), the chances of seriously considering suicide is 9 times higher for those who because of a mental, physical, or emotional condition have serious difficulty concentrating, remembering, or making decisions compared to those without a disability. The remaining disability types also increase the odds of seriously considering suicide compared to those without a disability.

Vermont adults with a disability have a greater odds of seriously considering suicide.



* because of a physical, mental, or emotional condition

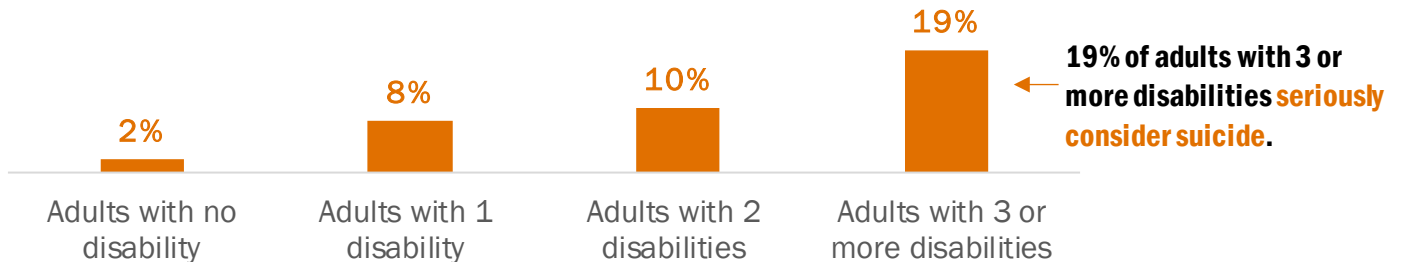
Source: Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 2018

ⁱ Poor mental health defined as 14+ days in the last 30 mental health was self-reported as not good.

How does the number of disabilities impact serious consideration of suicide?

Adults with three or more disabilities are more than twice as likely as those with one disability to seriously consider suicide (19% vs. 8%), a statistical difference. This suggests the more disabilities one has, the greater the chances one may seriously consider suicide. This is also consistent with national literature.ⁱⁱ

Adults with 3 or more disabilities are 2 times more likely to seriously consider suicide compared to adults with 1 disability.



Source: Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 2018

Healthcare Access and Cost

The ability to access affordable healthcare may impact health outcomes for those struggling with suicidality. Among adults with a disability who seriously consider suicide, 28% have delayed seeing a doctor in the past year due to cost, a rate that is 3.5 times greater than the general adult population (8%).

Key Takeaways

Vermont adults with a disability are more likely to consider suicide compared to those without a disability. This analysis reveals that there are varying degrees of risk associated with each type of disability examined and suggests that disabilities related to cognitive functioning and mental health may be at highest risk for seriously considering suicide. Some of the evidence-based strategies for reducing suicide among those with a disability include skills training for disability-serving programs on how to identify and support service recipients experiencing suicidality and reducing access to potential lethal means for individuals at risk for suicide.

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For more information on resources for suicide prevention: FacingSuicideVT.com

ⁱ In this context, disability refers to someone who has serious difficulty walking or climbing stairs, hearing, seeing, dressing or bathing, or who, because of a physical, mental, or emotional condition has difficulty doing errands alone, or has difficulty concentrating, making decisions, or remembering.

ⁱⁱ <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/34465506/>