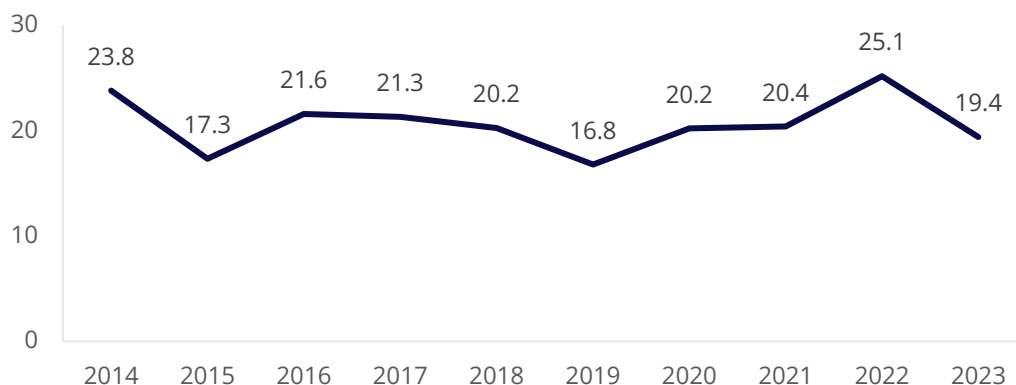


# Older adult suicides in Utah 2014–2023

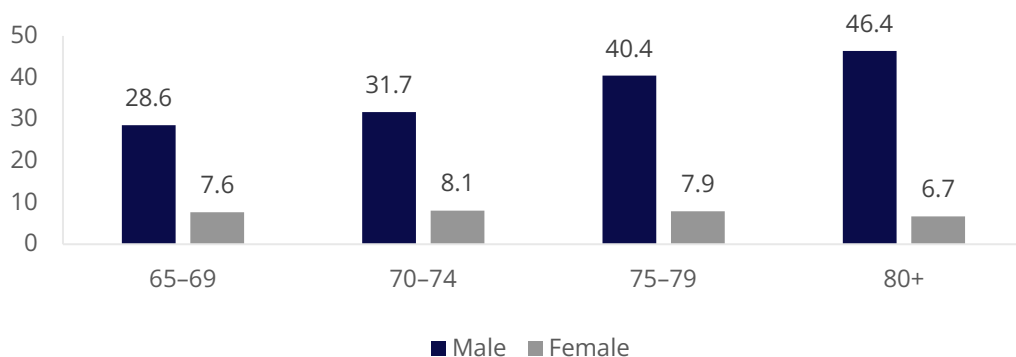
## Older adult suicides, aged 65 years or older, in Utah

- A total of 266 older adults aged 65 years and older died from suicide in Utah from 2021 to 2023.
- The highest rate of suicide death among older adults aged 65 years and older was in 2022 (25.1 per 100,000 population) which decreased in 2023.
- Males aged 80 years and older had the highest rate of death by suicide (46.4 per 100,000 population) compared to other older males, while females aged 70–74 years had the highest rate (8.1 per 100,000 population) of suicide deaths compared to other older females.
- Between 2019 and 2023, more than two-thirds (69.7%) of older adults who died by suicide used a firearm; this included 80.6% of males and 25.3% of females.

Rate of suicide deaths among older adults aged 65 and older per 100,000 population, Utah, 2014–2023



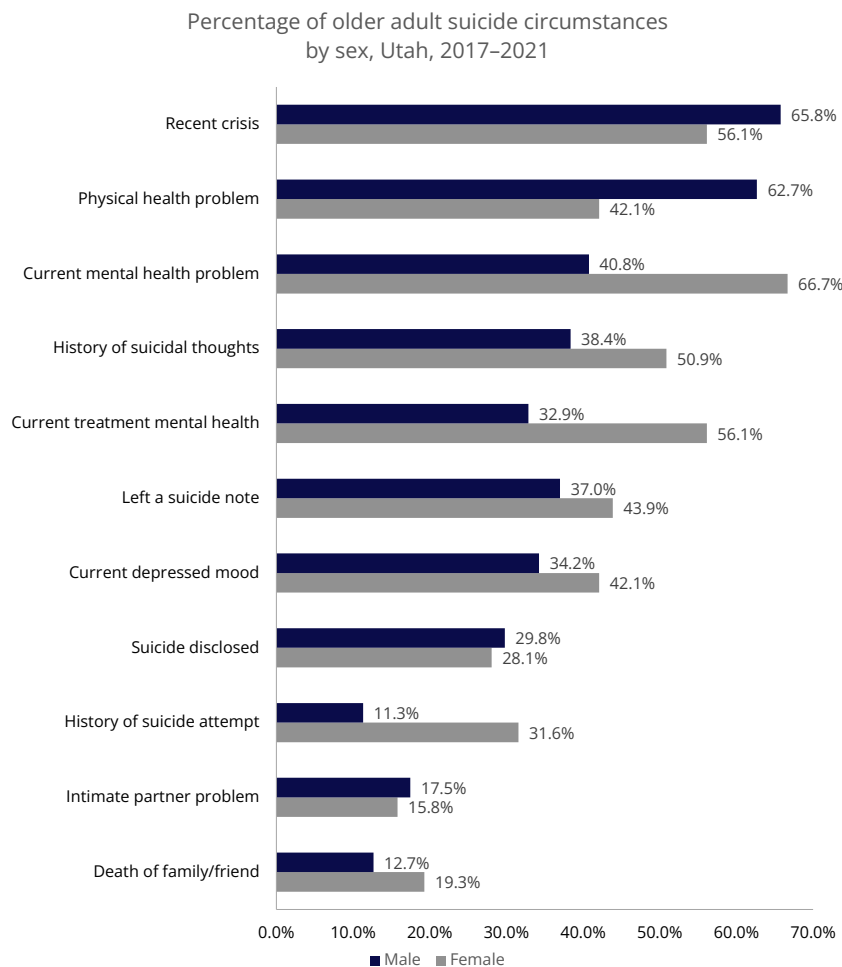
Rate of suicide deaths among older adults aged 65 and older per 100,000 population by sex and age group, Utah, 2019–2023



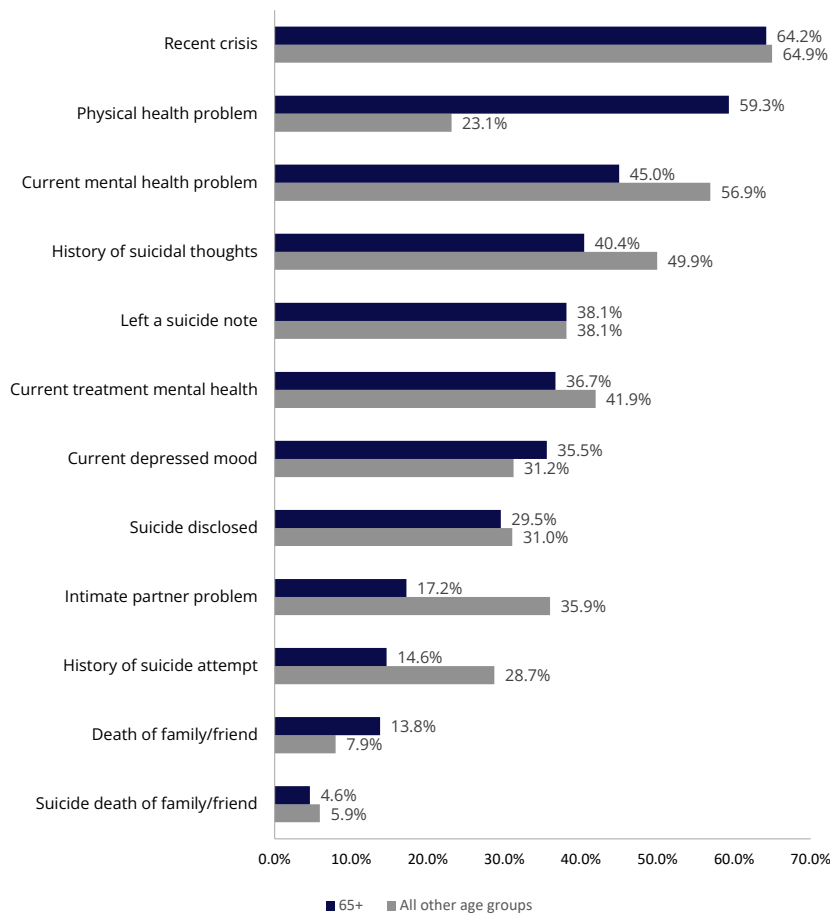
## Understanding the circumstances related to suicide deaths is a step toward prevention

The National Violent Death Reporting System (NVDRS) collects information about the specific circumstances that are reported or perceived as being related to the violent death. These circumstances are categorized into 5 areas: interpersonal, life stressors, mental health, substance use, and suicidal events. The percentage of circumstances is based on the number of cases reporting circumstances. A death can have more than 1 circumstance.

- Older adult males who died by suicide were more likely to have a recent crisis (65.8%) or a physical health problem (62.7%) that contributed to their death than female older adults.
- Older adult females who died by suicide were more likely to have current mental health problem (66.7%), current mental health treatment (56.1%), or a history of suicidal thoughts (50.9%) that contributed to their death than male older adults.
- Older adult males who died by suicide were less likely to have current mental health treatment (32.9%) than female older adults who died by suicide (56.1%).
- Older adults who died by suicide were more likely to have a physical health problem or experience a death of a friend/family member compared to other ages.
- Older adults who died by suicide were less likely to have intimate partner problems compared to other ages.



Percentage of suicide circumstances by age (older adults versus all other age groups), Utah, 2017–2021



## Knowing the facts can help prevent suicide

The NVDRS is the only comprehensive surveillance system that helps us know the “who, when, where, and how” about violent deaths. It helps provide insights about the “why” these deaths happened. The system links records from many sources (medical examiner reports, death certificates, law enforcement reports) into an anonymous database.

## Suicide is preventable

The [Utah Suicide Prevention State Plan](#) provides guidance on how individuals and communities can address suicide. It’s important to know what to do and what not to do when somebody discloses their suicide intent to you. Some suicide prevention tips include.<sup>1</sup>

- Take any warning signs or threats of suicide seriously.
- Call [988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline](#) anytime you or someone you know is struggling with their mental or emotional health. It’s free, confidential, and available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- If a friend or relative outside your residency is having suicidal thoughts, ask to store their firearms or security keys with you. Always recommend they seek help.

- Reassure older adults experiencing social isolation, depression, or homelessness that they are appreciated. Ways to do this include home visits and regular contact.

### Suicide prevention resources

- Promoting Emotional Health and Prevention Suicide: A Toolkit for Senior Centers, <https://store.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/sma15-4416.pdf>
- Suicide Prevention Resource Center—Reducing Loneliness and Social Isolation Among Older Adults, <https://sprc.org/>
- 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline, <https://988lifeline.org>
- American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, <https://afsp.org>
- LiveOn Utah, <https://liveonutah.org>
- National Alliance on Mental Illness Utah Chapter, <https://namiut.org>
- SafeUT, <https://safeut.org>
- The Trevor Project, <https://thetrevorproject.org>
- Tran Lifeline, <https://translifeline.org>
- Utah Poison Control Center, <https://poisoncontrol.utah.edu>
- Utah Suicide Prevention Coalition, <https://utahsuicideprevention.org>

### References

1. National Council on Aging—Suicide and Older Adults: What You Should Know, <https://www.ncoa.org/article/suicide-and-older-adults-what-you-should-know/> [cited 2024 January].
2. Suicide Prevention Resource Center—Older Adults, <https://sprc.org/populations/older-adults/> [cited 2024 January].
3. Utah Death Certificate Database, Office of Vital Records and Statistics, Utah Department of Health and Human Services, 2014–2023 data queried via Utah’s Indicator Based Information System for Public Health (IBIS-PH) [cited 2025 January].
4. Utah Violent Death Reporting System, Violence and Injury Prevention Program, Utah Department of Health and Human Services, 2017–2021 data [cited 2023 December].
5. Population data: National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) through a collaborate agreement with the U.S. Census Bureau, IBIS Version 2021, data queried via Utah’s Indicator Based Information System for Public Health (IBIS-PH) [cited 2023 December].

To learn about suicides among other age groups in Utah or other violent deaths, visit <https://vipp.utah.gov/ut-vdrs/>.

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