
Support for Community-Based Suicide Prevention Programs

Direction

- **Seoul: A Safe, Suicide-Free City**
- **Seoul promotes a culture of life care, where citizens safeguard each other's well-being and lives.**

Seoul's Policy for Decreasing Suicide Rates

○ **Cultivating a societal environment for suicide prevention**

- Seoul has been fostering a culture of respect for life and identifying high-risk groups for suicide by conducting suicide prevention education for citizens. Over the years, 2.6% of Seoul's population (cumulative total of 240,631 individuals) have been trained as "lifeguards." The establishment and support of Mental Health Community Education Groups in each district have strengthened citizen engagement in identifying high-risk groups and promoting a culture of respect for life. Additionally, to facilitate early detection of depression and high-risk suicide groups, depression screenings totaling 86,751 (cumulative) were conducted at primary healthcare centers with lower barriers to access than psychiatric facilities. By linking and managing these identified high-risk suicide groups, Seoul has expanded its collaborative system for detection and care.

○ **Providing tailored suicide prevention services**

- Seoul City is implementing suicide prevention programs tailored to different life stages (children, adolescents, young adults, middle-aged individuals, and seniors), as well as vulnerable groups such as sexual minorities. The Seoul Suicide Prevention Center has reinforced its response to suicide attempts through 24-hour mental health counseling and emergency intervention services. Efforts have been made to identify and support families bereaved by suicide, who are considered high-risk groups, by establishing networks with relevant agencies such as the police and fire departments and providing support services. Additionally, Seoul is committed to enhancing the management of reported high-risk suicide cases.

○ **Strengthening the foundation for implementing suicide prevention policies**

- Seoul has established a city-specific psychological autopsy system, enabling the implementation of strategic suicide prevention measures based on scientific evidence. It supports suicide prevention programs in 25 districts by providing cause-of-death statistics and related big data analysis. Seoul remains committed to implementing comprehensive suicide prevention programs aimed at reducing the suicide rate.

□ **Seoul's Strategy to Reduce Suicide Rates**

○ **Establishment of Seoul's medium- to long-term comprehensive suicide prevention plan**

- Despite Seoul currently showing the lowest suicide rate¹⁾ among the 17 cities and provinces in Korea, there is a pressing need to develop city-level strategies to tackle its persistently high suicide rate, which has remained more than twice the OECD average for an extended period. As part of policy development efforts, government officials will engage in academic research to analyze the fundamental causes of suicide and diagnose policies. This aims to overhaul the suicide prevention system, develop tailored suicide prevention policies specific to Seoul, and establish Seoul's comprehensive suicide prevention plan for the medium to long term based on the identified key tasks.

○ **Provision of tailored suicide prevention services for target groups**

- Seoul City aims to provide tailored suicide prevention services targeting groups facing economic crises, mental health crises, and individuals at different stages of life and living environments, with a perspective of understanding the diverse causes of suicide and adopting an integrated approach across various departments. Seoul will continue to strengthen customized management for specific target groups by establishing a coordinated system among relevant agencies and enhancing lifeguard training for continuous identification of high-risk groups.

○ **Enhancing post-intervention management for high-risk suicide groups**

- Through post-intervention management for suicide attempters who seek emergency room assistance, Seoul intends to prevent further suicide attempts and ultimately reduce suicide fatalities. We will bolster collaboration with relevant agencies such as the police and fire department to assist families bereaved by suicide. In cases of suicide loss, we will provide crisis counseling through emergency dispatch services and offer comprehensive psychological, environmental, and economic support to aid in coping with grief and facilitate recovery.

○ **Implementation of evidence-based suicide prevention programs**

- Through extensive analysis and discussion of evidence-based suicide prevention programs proven effective abroad, Seoul will develop and implement tailored programs focusing on five main areas: identifying and intervening with high-risk groups, launching campaigns to enhance awareness of suicide prevention, providing training for lifeguards, managing individuals who have attempted suicide, and regulating access to suicide means. The step-by-step implementation of these tailored programs is intended to improve the efficiency²⁾ of Seoul's suicide prevention efforts.

1) In 2022, Korea's nationwide suicide rate was 25.2 per 100,000 people, while Seoul's rate stood at 21.4 per 100,000 people, marking Seoul as the city with the lowest rate among the 17 cities and provinces.

2) Evidence-based suicide prevention programs are known for their capacity to achieve maximum project efficiency with minimal resource allocation.