

Reaching Out

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‘Reducing suicide rates requires a collective, concerted effort from all groups in society; health, social services, other professionals, communities and community leaders, voluntary and statutory agencies and organisations, parents, friends, neighbours and individuals. It also requires the careful nurturing of a culture in which people in psychological distress don’t hesitate to seek help’

Remarks by President Mary McAleese
at the World Congress of Suicide Prevention - Killarney in August 2007

Purpose Of Post

- *Co-ordinate and implement national suicide prevention strategy*
- *To enhance resilience across all population groups around mental health with a specific focus on vulnerable and at risk sectors.*
- *Consultation with statutory and non statutory organisations working in the area of suicide prevention, bereavement support and deliberate self harm.*
- *Support and co-ordinate high quality research relation to suicide and to translate research findings into action*



Purpose Of Post

- *Support stigma reduction*
- *Advocate for the development of and access to mental health services within primary care, crisis intervention services and bereavement services*
- *Support, co-ordinate, and develop appropriate training in mental health promotion and suicide prevention.*
- *To draw strategic guidance from the range of policies/strategic documents.*



Reach Out

National Strategy for
Action on Suicide Prevention
2005 - 2014

Reach Out



National Strategy for
Action on Suicide Prevention
2005-2014

A Vision For Change

Report of The Expert Group on Mental
health Policy



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

Principal Duties and Responsibilities

To develop a population health approach whereby mental health is improved over the entire lifecycle encompassing both individuals and communities.

To develop coping mechanisms to address challenging life events e.g. bereavements, loss, family issues.

This is done within:

- *Health Promotion*
- *Community Setting*
- *Health Care Setting*
- *Research*
- *Health Literacy*
- *Education & Training*



Mental Health Promotion

- *Develop and progress mental health promotion by developing evidence based programmes and interventions aimed at strengthening individuals, strengthening communities and reducing structural barriers to mental health*



Community Setting

- *Establish, distribute and maintain a directory of appropriate community & voluntary groups who are providing services in relation to mental health, suicide and parasuicide.*
- *Liaise with and establish networks between the HSE, community and voluntary groups which are currently providing services and supports in mental health, suicide and parasuicide, whilst respecting the specific ethos of each group.*
- *Enhance the capacity of all groups working in this area through training, support, establishment of best practice procedures methodologies*



Health Care Setting

- *Cooperate with all other health and social services on the issue of suicide to promote the prevention of suicide and re-orientate the service to reduce the risk of suicidal behaviour amongst high risk groups and vulnerable people.*
- *Act as a resource person and catalyst to enable others to work effectively in reducing suicide in line with standardised evidence based practice.*



Health Literacy

- *To enhance health literacy across all sup-population groups around positive mental health and suicide prevention and the development of appropriate resources.*



Research

- *To promote research and local needs assessment relating to suicidal behaviour in line with the NOSP National research strategy.*
- *To develop appropriate evaluation tools by which outcome/impact effectiveness of initiatives can be measured.*
- *To create a dynamic whereby intervention's and programmes are re-aligned with research needs assessment findings.*



Education & Training

To oversee the implementation & monitoring of a regional training strategy on suicide prevention and mental health promotion in line with National training strategy



safeTALK

suicide alertness for everyone

SafeTALK is half day training for community groups, to enable participants identify the signs of a person with thoughts of suicide and know how to support them.



ASIST

Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training

ASIST is a two-day skills based course which trains participants to recognise and respond to a suicidal risk. The course provides opportunities to learn what a person needs from others in a crisis, how to keep safe and get further help.



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The approach taken to suicide prevention is based on recommendations by the WHO and combines

- *a whole population approach*
 - *a more targeted approach aimed at those individuals who have particular vulnerabilities*
 - *support to individuals and communities bereaved by suicide*
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- *Evidence suggests that community based programmes are effective in reducing suicidal behaviour.*



Reach Out strategy

Targeted suicide
prevention



Suicide

Whole population
prevention

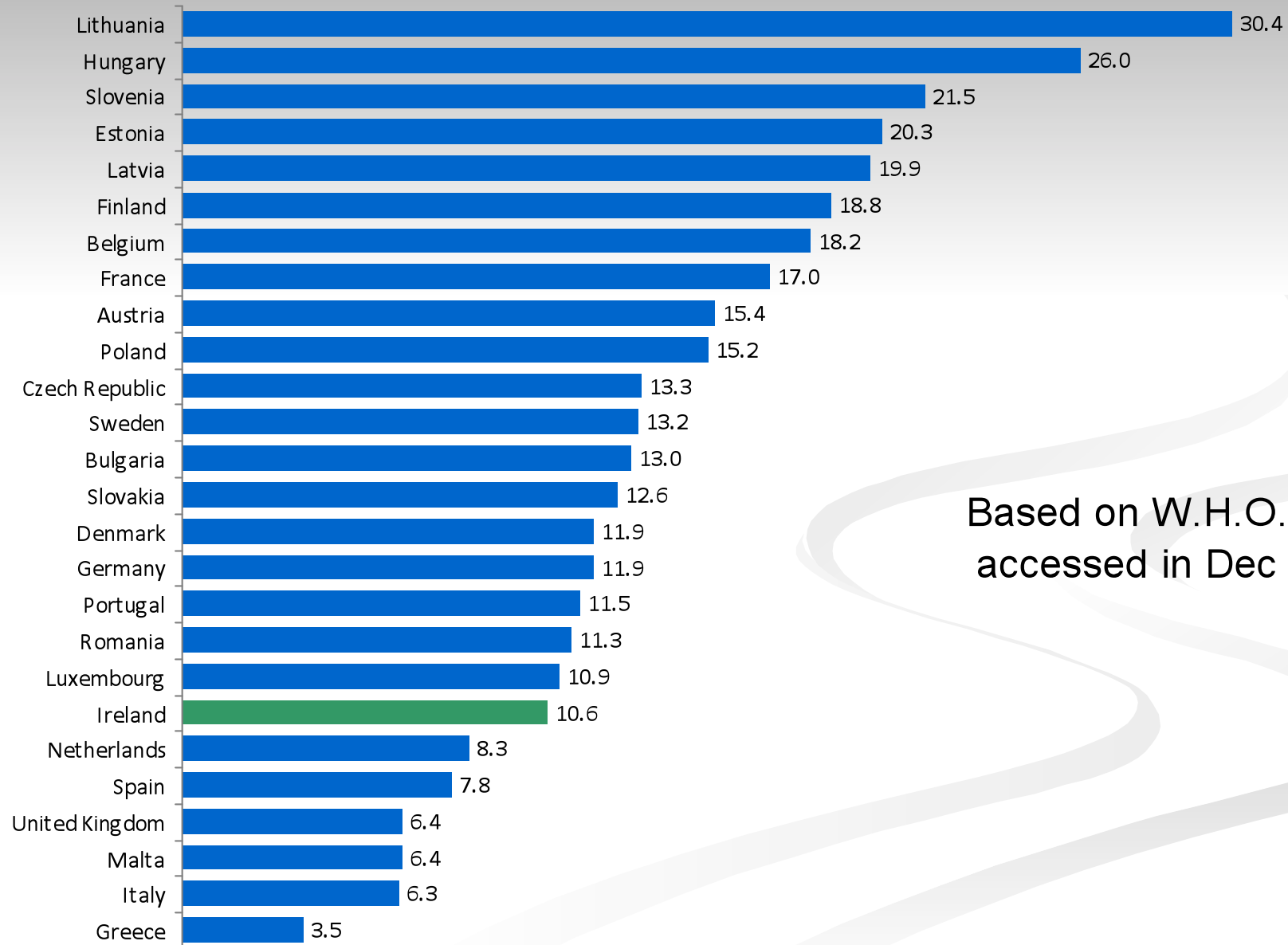


Self harm

**Hidden DSH and
mental health
problems**

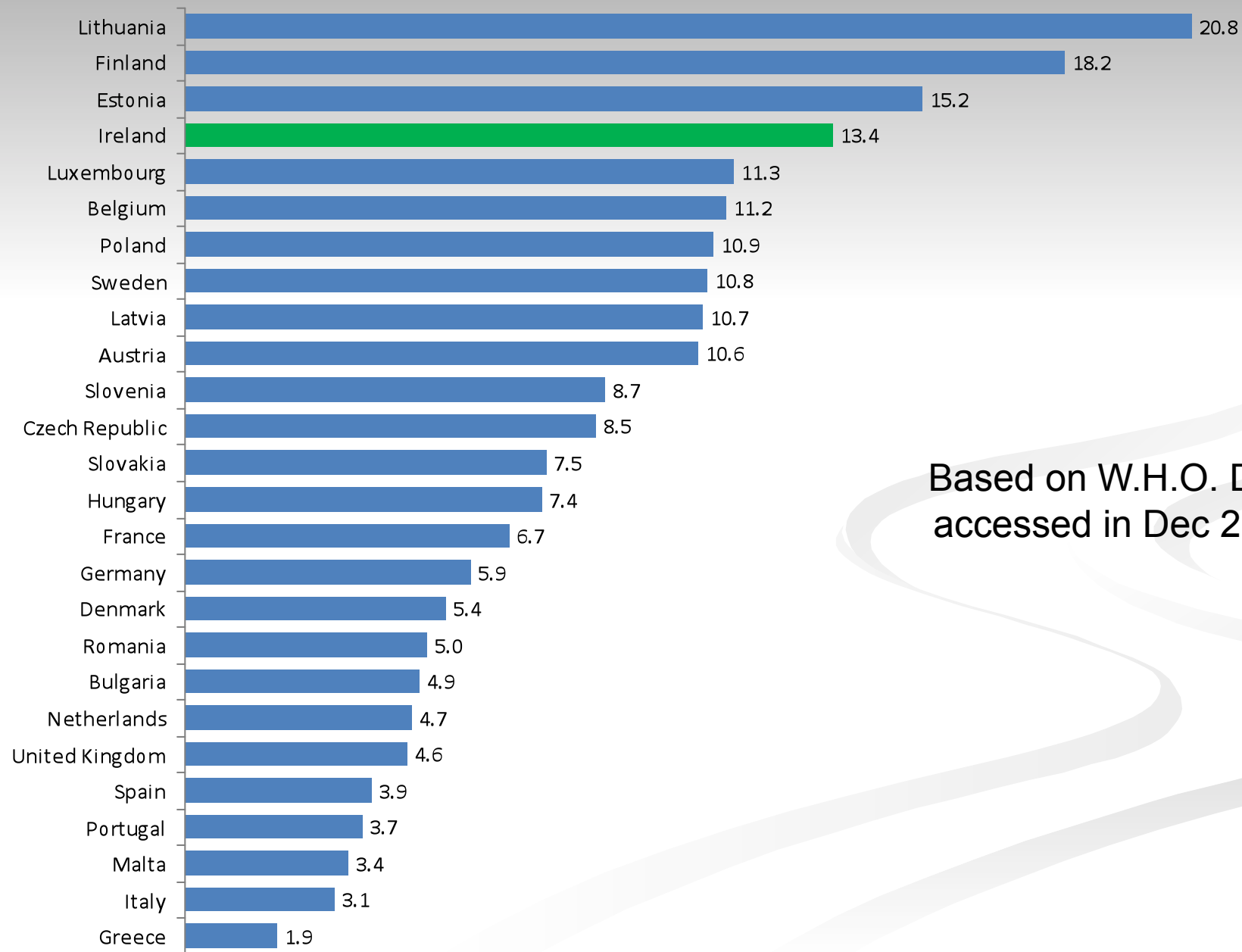
**What does the
research tell us about
suicide and suicidal
behaviour in Ireland?**

Total suicide rate per 100,000 population in the EU



Based on W.H.O. Data
accessed in Dec 2009

Youth suicide rate (15-24yr olds) per 100,000 population in the EU



Based on W.H.O. Data
accessed in Dec 2009

Figure 2: Rate of suicide per 100,000 population by gender, 1980-2006

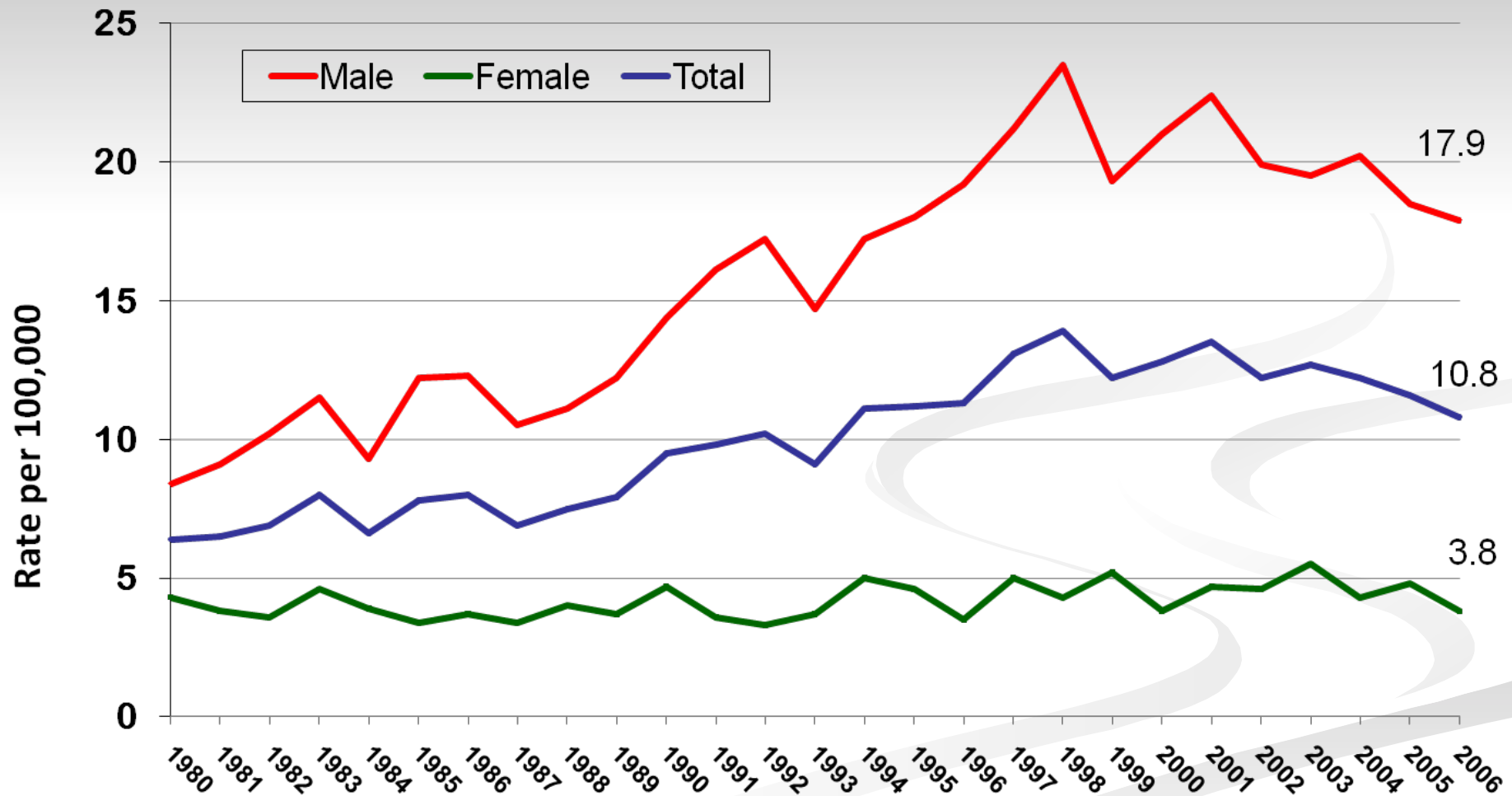
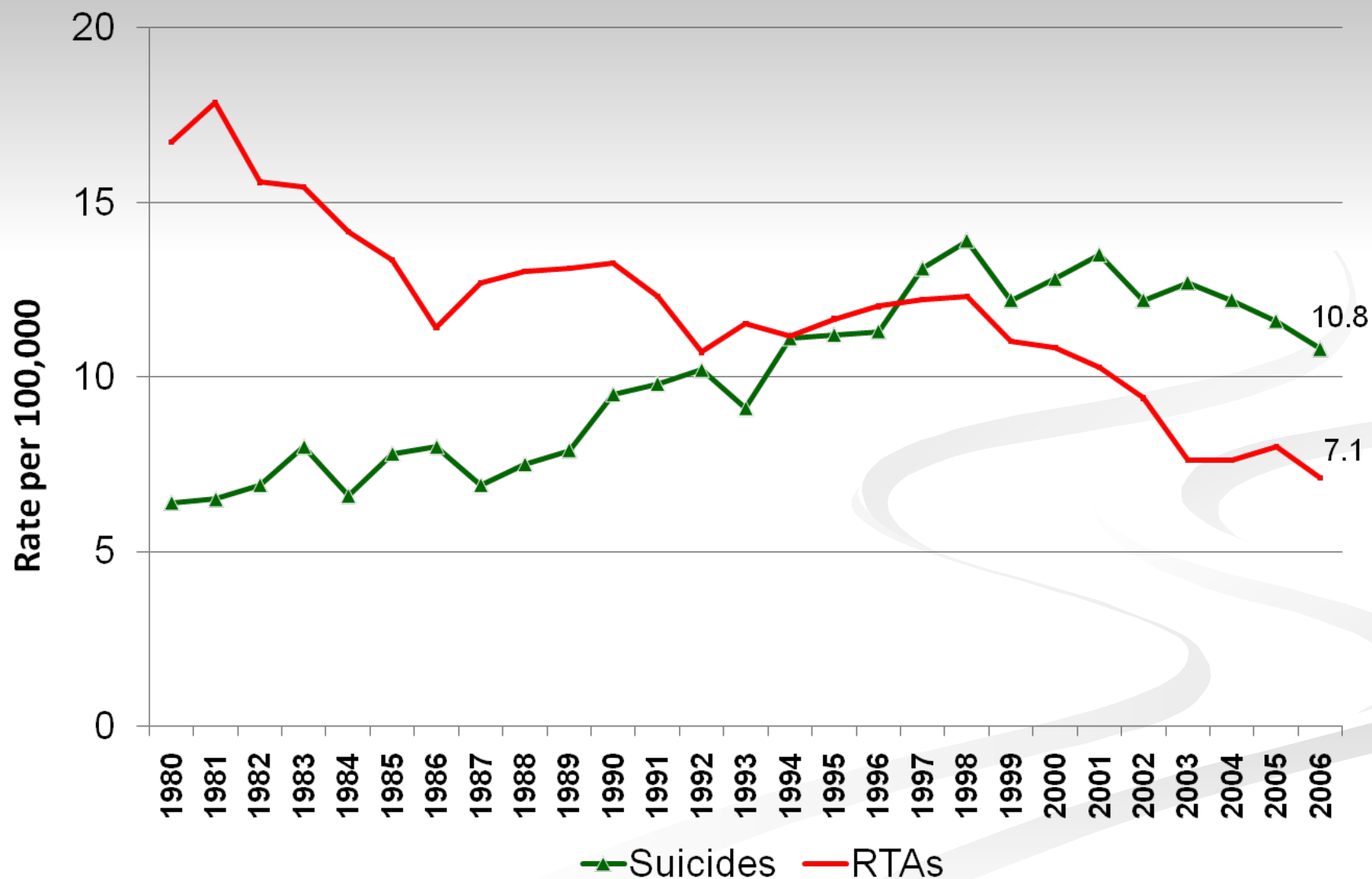
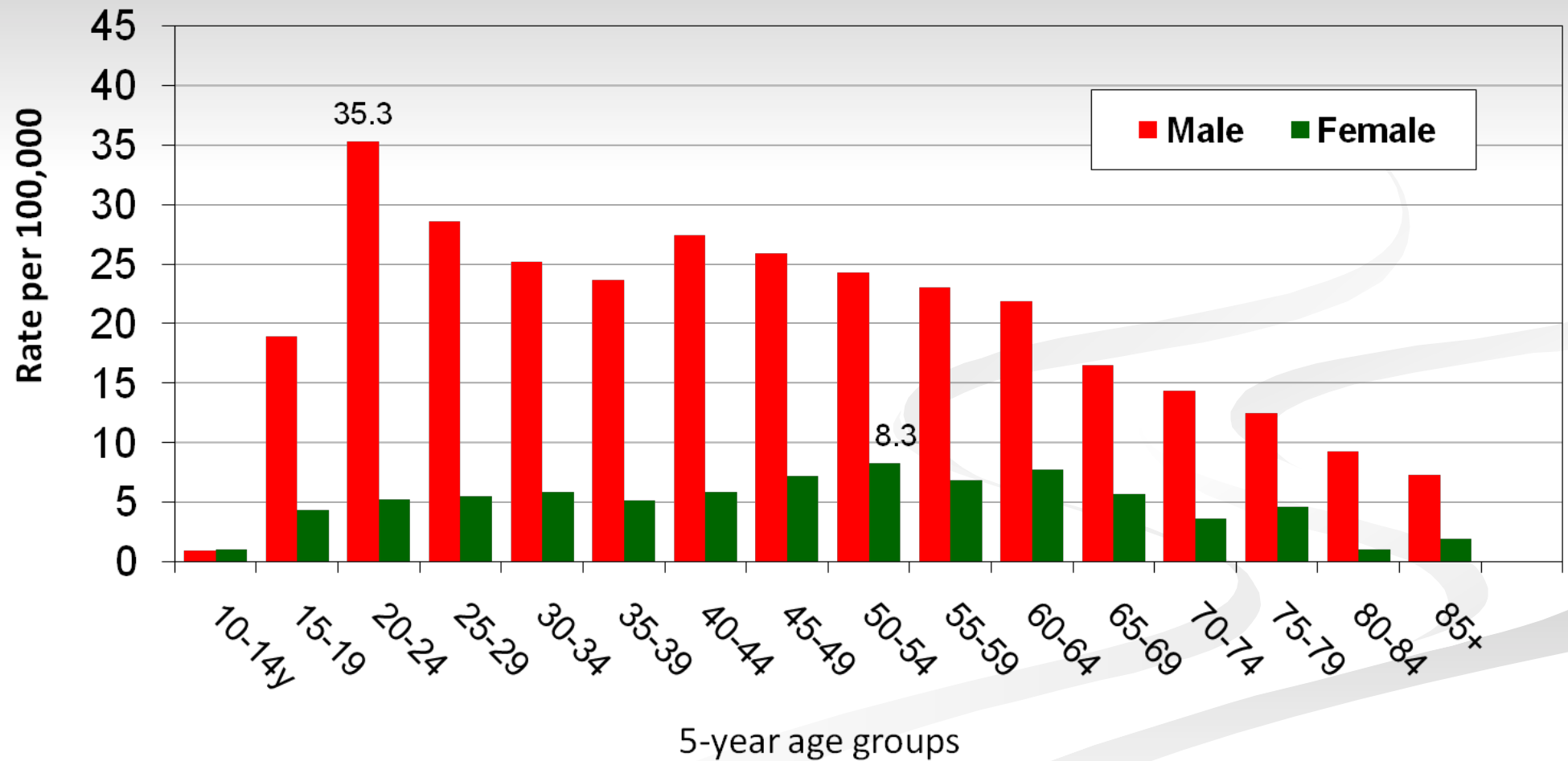


Figure 4: Suicide compared with road traffic accident fatalities – rates per 100,000 population, 1980-2006

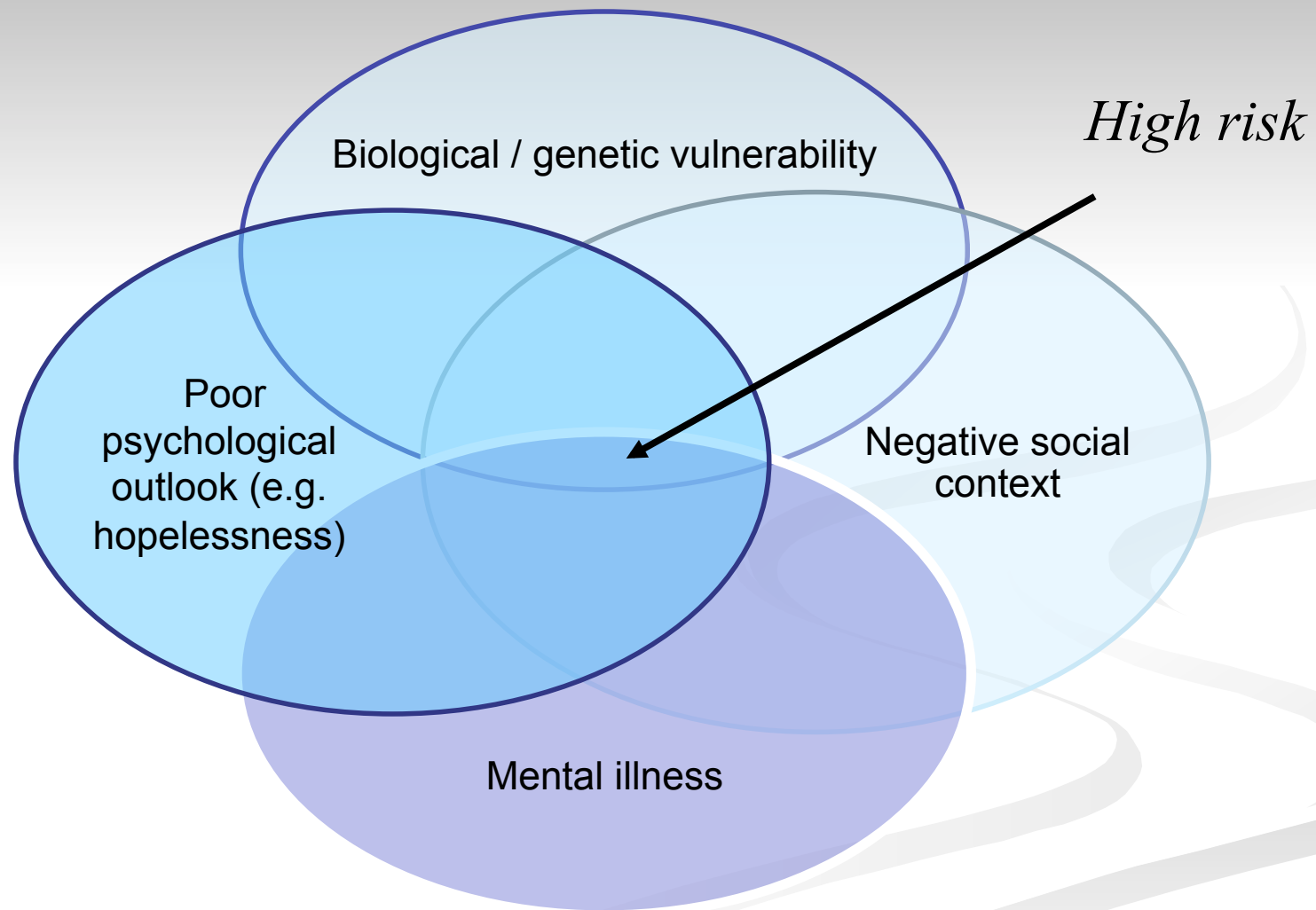


Average annual suicide rate by age and gender, 2002-2006



Biopsychosocial model of suicidal behaviour

Biopsychosocial model of suicidal behaviour



Protective Factors


- Employment
 - Social Values
 - Health Treatment
 - Coping Skills
 - Reasons for Living
 - Physical activity & health
 - Family Connectedness
 - Supportive Schools
 - Social Support
 - Religious Participation
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How can I support individuals
identified at risk of suicidal
behaviour?

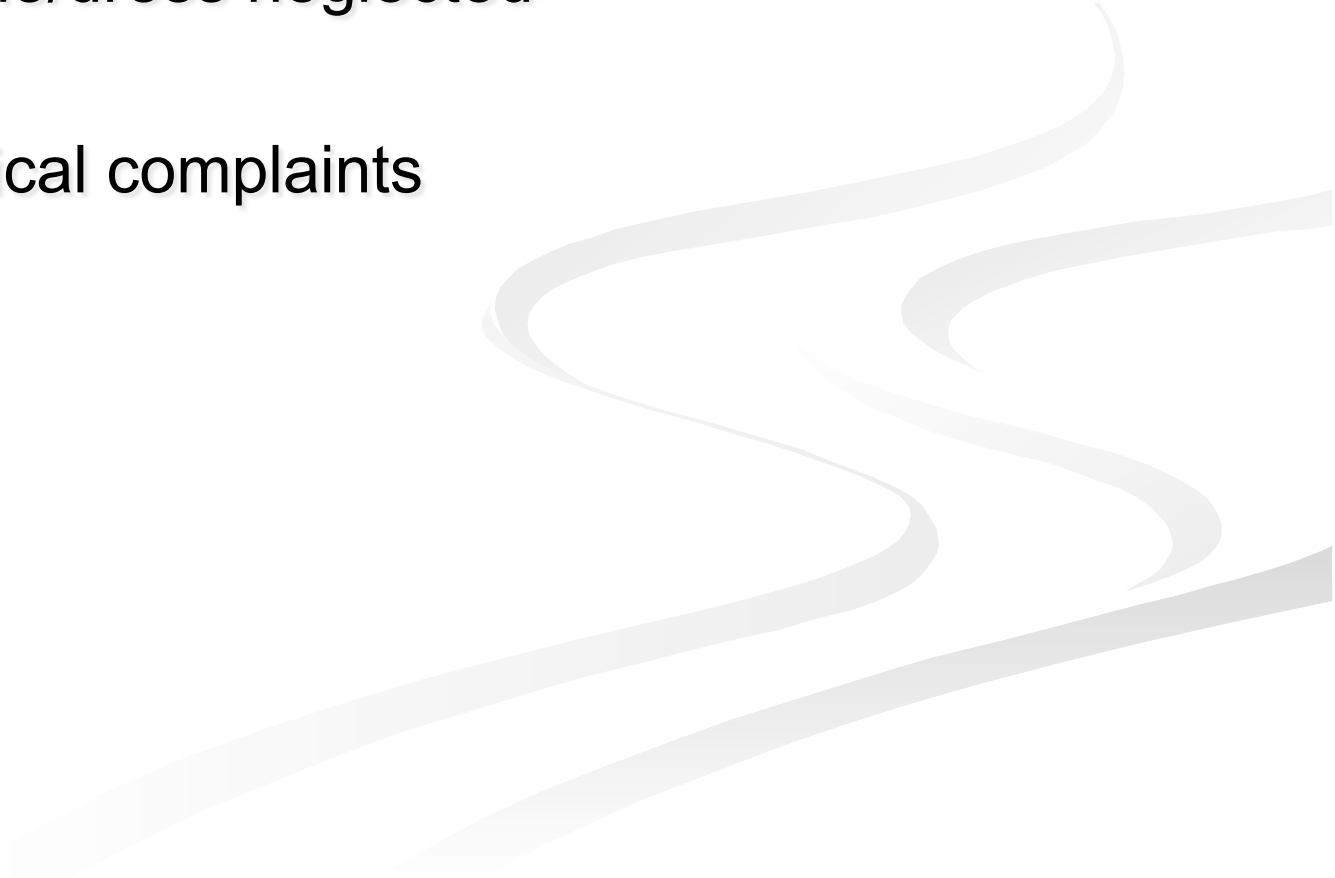
Warning Signs

- Some of these warning signs and risk factors can be associated with everyday behaviour
- You should look at the overall picture for the person you are concerned about
- However, the more warning signs and risk factors, the higher the possible risk
- Some people show their warning signs in very subtle ways and they can be missed but seen only in hindsight
- It is important to treat each person and their case as individual and unique.

Individual Warning Signs- Behaviour

- Difficulties in school/work
 - Dropping out of activities
 - Sleeping/eating disturbances
 - Isolating self from friends/family
 - Drug/alcohol abuse
 - Disinterest in usual activities
 - High risk behaviours
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Warning signs - Physical

- Neglect of appearance
 - Personal hygiene/dress neglected
 - Persistent physical complaints
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Warning signs - thoughts

- Pessimistic
- Inability to find solutions to problems
- Preoccupation with a known suicide
- Overly self-critical
- Difficulty in concentrating
- Expressing suicidal thoughts

Individual Warning Signs – Suicide Specific

- Writing about suicide.
- Talking about suicide.
- Listening to songs with a suicidal theme.
- Threats and statements of intent.
- Giving away treasured possessions .
- Tidying up affairs.

Risk situations (1)

- Death of a loved one or significant other
- Break up of a relationship
- Bullying or victimisation
- Disappointment with results
- Unemployment & poor finances

Risk situations (2)

- Access to a method of suicide e.g. medication, firearms
- Serious illness
- Interpersonal conflicts or losses
- Legal or disciplinary problems
- Peer group pressure

Taking action: Responding at an individual level

- Key steps in taking action
- Skills to enable taking action
 - Show you care
 - Listen
 - Ask the question
 - Call for help

Active listening

Do's

- Show interest
- Be warm and supportive
- Pay attention
- Ask for clarification
- Allow time
- Be silent
- Be empathetic

Don'ts

- Argue
- Interrupt
- Make value judgements
- Give advice
- Find the solution
- Burden the person
- Give out platitudes

Encouraging the person to get help

- Focus on the person's positive strengths – how have earlier problems been resolved?
- Who could the person rely on in bad times? Is there anyone who might help?
- Explore alternatives to suicide :
 - “Let's talk to someone who can help”
 - “I will stay with you until you get help”
 - “You're not alone and help is available”

Eight key steps for helping

1. Take all threats seriously.
2. Ask the person to tell you what is wrong.
3. Listen and offer support.
4. Remove anything that could be lethal.
5. Don't leave the suicidal person alone.
6. Be positive and emphasise choices.
7. Don't promise confidentiality.
8. Get professional help.

*‘Human understanding is
the most effective
weapon against suicide’*

Dr Edwin Shneidman

Thank You