

Mental Health Awareness: Understanding Suicide

UCF School of Social Work Panel Presentation:

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Suicide Prevention: Why don't we talk about suicide?

For those thinking about suicide:

- Fear, embarrassment, shame
- Uncertainty of what may happen/how others will react
- Beliefs that “things will get better in time”
- Not knowing what to say or do to get help

Health & Mental Health Professionals:

- Lack of knowledge, skills, negative experiences working with at-risk individuals
- Negative attitudes/perceptions, stigma

Did you know...

○ In the U.S.,

- Suicide is the 10th leading cause of death
- 45,000 lost lives each year → 123 deaths per day, **1 person dies by suicide every 11.7 minutes**
 - **2nd** leading cause of death, 10-34
 - Ages 35-54, 4th leading cause of death

○ In Florida,

- Suicide is the 10th leading cause of death (all ages), rates have increased over the last decade (24%)
- 9,400 individuals died by suicide (2015-2017)
 - 3,084 middle-aged adults, 35-54
 - Over 2,100 young adult
 - 1771: ages 20-34
 - 353 under 19



What High School Students in Florida Report

Feelings sad or hopeless

- 27.8%

About 1 out of 4

Suicide ideation

- 13.8%

About 1 out of 7

Plan to attempt suicide

- 10.7%

About 1 out of 9

Attempted suicide

- 7.6%

About 1 out of 13

??Why are youth dying by suicide??

Suicide Prevention: Who's at risk?

Environmental risk factors

- **Exposure to trauma/victimization**
 - Sexual abuse
 - Maltreatment
 - Peer victimization/bullying (incl. cyber & text); peer & media influences
 - Family & neighborhood violence
- **Sexual & gender minority youth**
 - Ostracized by family/friends, rejection, isolation
 - Trauma/victimized
- **Youth involved in child welfare & juvenile justice systems**
 - Exposure to trauma/victimization
 - Parental/Familial dysfunction (e.g., mental health/substance abuse problems, limited parenting skills)

Suicide Prevention: Who's at risk?

Psychological risk factors

➤ Clinical ailments & impairments

- Depression/dysthymia
- ADHD
- Conduct disorders, intermittent explosive disorder (IED)
- Eating disorders
- Limited ability to regulate emotions (coping ability)

➤ History of suicide ideation and attempts

- Hx of ideation: 5x more likely to attempt suicide as an adult
- Hx of suicide attempts: 17x more likely to attempt suicide as an adult

Youth who attempt or die by suicide are often exposed to *multiple* stressors/risk factors that occur over time

??What can health & mental health professionals do to prevent suicide??

Suicide Prevention: How can you help?

- Education: Seek out training opportunities
 - General gatekeeper training (QPR, safeTALK, Connect)
 - Suicide risk assessment & management training (QPRT, ASIST, AMSR, RRSR)
 - Screening/assessment tools/measures
 - Evidence-based treatment modalities (Integrated CBT, Dialectical Behavioral Therapy, Interpersonal Psychotherapy)
- Get Involved: Know what the local community is doing to prevent suicide
 - Attend community mental health advisory boards, school boards
 - Participate in community events to raise awareness: MHA, NAMI, AFSP
- Advocate for Change: Mezzo/Macro-Level
 - Advocate for changes in policies/procedures (screening, asmt, treatment, post-care) in health/behavioral healthcare settings
 - School legislation: suicide prevention training for school personnel and students

Suicide Prevention: How can you help *today*?



- Be a **resource** to those in need
 - Actively listen, convey the message that you care, promote hope
 - Help connect your peer, neighbor, or family member to community resources
 - Promote the use of the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (24hr/7days a week, *confidential crisis line*)

For Deaf & Hard
of Hearing
(chat):
1-800-799-4889

NATIONAL
SUICIDE
PREVENTION
LIFELINE
1-800-273-TALK (8255)
suicidepreventionlifeline.org

RED NACIONAL
de
PREVENCIÓN
del
SUICIDIO
1-888-628-9454
prevenciondelsuicidio.org

For LGBTQQ Youth:
1-866-488-7386,
text "START" to
678678

Veterans
Crisis Line
(text):
838255



Thank you!

For more information about suicide prevention and intervention training:

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