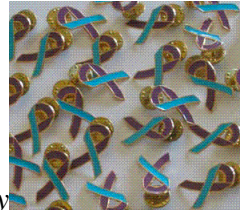


[Suicide Rates Remain High; Timely Treatment Effective for Prevention](#)

Details

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September 10, 2010 is World Suicide Prevention Day

According to the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP), suicide is the fourth leading cause of death for adults and the third leading cause of death for youth. Every day, approximately 2,300 individuals attempt to commit suicide and nearly 90 individuals die by suicide. Several recent suicides in New Jersey, including a state trooper, veteran and school teacher, drew media attention to this prevalent cause of death.

At least 90 percent of individuals who commit suicide had diagnosable and treatable psychiatric illnesses, such as depression, schizophrenia or alcohol or drug abuse, according to the AFSP, which noted that September 10 is World Suicide Prevention Day. The staggering numbers of suicide could be reduced with the assurance of prompt access to mental health and addiction treatment services, which are effective in preventing suicide. Recognition of risk factors and warning signs and knowing how to help someone at risk are equally essential and can help ensure that individuals receive help when needed.

“We need to ensure that young children, adolescents and adults throughout New Jersey have timely access to high quality mental healthcare and addiction treatment services. These services have been proven to be highly effective, not only in improving the quality of life, but also in saving lives,” said Debra Wentz, Ph.D., Chief Executive Officer of New Jersey Association of Mental Health and Addiction Agencies, Inc. (NJAMHAA). “To tackle these potentially life-threatening diseases, we must eliminate the barriers imposed by insufficient funding and the stigma that still prevails. Just as someone with a chronic disease such as diabetes can lead a healthy life with appropriate treatment, individuals with depression or another mental illness must not hesitate to seek out the help they need to lead a productive life.”

Additionally, friends and family members can play a critical role in recognizing the possibility of suicide attempts and taking steps to help individuals at risk. Risk factors include psychiatric disorders, past history of attempted suicide, genetic predisposition (family history of suicide, suicide attempts or psychiatric illnesses), impulsivity and demographics (males, especially elderly

Caucasian men, are more likely to commit suicide than females and younger individuals), according to the AFSP.

Warning signs include observable signs of serious depression (including unrelenting low mood, hopelessness, anxiety, withdrawal and sleep problems); increased use of alcohol or other drugs; recent demonstration of impulsivity and unnecessary risk taking; threatening suicide or expressing a wish to die; making a plan (giving away prized possessions; impulsively purchasing firearms; obtaining poisons, medications or other means of committing suicide) and unexpected rage or anger.

The AFSP advises that friends and family members take all risks of suicide seriously and express a willingness to listen and encourage the person at risk to seek professional help. In acute crisis situations – when an individual is talking about or making plans for suicide – seek professional help immediately and do not leave the individual alone. If necessary, go to an emergency room, or call 9-1-1 or the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255).

To locate mental healthcare and addiction treatment providers in your county, visit www.njamhaa.org, scroll down and click on “Need Treatment?” in the left-hand sidebar. AFSP also provides resources for those coping with suicide loss.