

WORLD SUICIDE PREVENTION DAY
SEPTEMBER 10, 2009

September 10th, 2009, is World Suicide Prevention Day, organized by the International Association for Suicide Prevention (IASP) in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO).

The theme for World Suicide Prevention Day in 2009 is “Suicide Prevention in Different Cultures”. The Day will be launched at the Press Conference of the United Nations on September 10th at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, where the President of IASP, Professor Brian Mishara, and WHO representatives will announce the latest figures on suicide worldwide as well as suicide prevention activities.

“Suicide is preventable. Suicide deaths exact a tremendous and tragic psychological, social and economic cost every year, but the primary message we want to convey on World Suicide Prevention Day is that we can prevent suicide” said Professor Brian Mishara. “More than a million people worldwide die by suicide each year. More people kill themselves than die in all wars, terrorist activities and homicides. Many millions more make suicide attempts severe enough to need medical treatment, and over six million people are affected each year by the disastrous impact of the suicide of a close friend or family member”.

“We want to send a positive message and a message of hope”, said Professor Mishara. “We now have a clear understanding of the causes of suicide and we know enough to be able to prevent a significant proportion of these tragic, unnecessary and premature deaths, to treat suicidal people effectively and to help families bereaved by suicide.”

Around the world, global, national and local events, including conferences, meetings, concerts and activities with spiritual or cultural content will take place on September 10th to develop awareness of suicide as a major preventable cause of premature death. These events will also enhance understanding about suicide, and publicize progress and programmes for effective suicide prevention.

The United Nations Press Conference will be preceded by a public conference, organized by the International Association for Suicide Prevention, and featuring speakers from the World Health Organization, the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP), the U.S. National Lifeline Network of Telephone Helplines, the Suicide Prevention Resource Centre and the National Organization of People of Colour Against Suicide. The public conference, to which everyone is welcome, is from 10:00 to 11:30 AM in Room 7 of the United Nations Headquarters.

The conference includes discussion of suicide prevention approaches in different cultures, the challenges facing suicide prevention in Latin America, preventing pesticide suicide in Asia, and international approaches to supporting people bereaved by suicide.

At the conference at the UN, Professor Mishara will review global suicide prevention activities and give examples of international partnerships to address suicide.

“Experts from many countries in the International Association for Suicide Prevention have collaborated to produce guidelines for the World Health Organization to assist media in reporting on suicide, to prevent suicide in prisons and to assist families bereaved by suicide”, according to Professor Mishara..

The International Association for Suicide Prevention will hold its 25th biennial congress in Montevideo, Uruguay from 27th -31st October, 2009, where the theme of this year's World Suicide Prevention Day theme, will be pursued with over 400 presentations about suicide prevention from international delegates.

“This congress will be a wonderful opportunity, together with World Suicide Prevention Day, to disseminate the very considerable knowledge that we now have about suicide, and to develop coordinated and comprehensive suicide prevention initiatives throughout the world, adapted to local cultures and resources,” said Professor Mishara.

. Suicide results from a complex interaction of causal factors, including mental illness, poverty, substance abuse, social isolation, losses, relationship difficulties and workplace problems. To be effective, suicide prevention needs to incorporate a multi-faceted approach that acknowledges the multiple causes of suicidal behaviour. Suicide prevention involves health and mental health professionals, volunteers, researchers, families and others bereaved by suicide, as well as central and local governments, education, emergency workers, employers, religious leaders, politicians and the media.

The International Association for Suicide Prevention was founded in Vienna (1960) as a fellowship of researchers, clinicians, practitioners, volunteers and national and local organizations. IASP, in official relations with the WHO, believes that suicide prevention should be given greater priority at global, national, and local levels incorporating research that has shown suicide is preventable.

Further information may be found on the IASP web site, as well as examples of activities held on this day in different countries: www.iasp.info/wspd/.

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