

World Suicide Prevention Day

● ***Suicide Prevention: One World Connected***

Suicide Prevention: One World Connected

Suicide is a major public health problem. The psychological pain that leads each of these individuals to take their lives is unimaginable. Their deaths leave families and friends bereft, and often have a major ripple effect on communities.

Every year, over 800,000 almost people die from suicide; this roughly corresponds to one death every 40 seconds. The number of lives lost each year through suicide exceeds the number of deaths due to homicide and war combined.

Suicide is the fifth leading causes of death among those aged 30-49 years in 2012 globally, and is the second leading cause of death in the 15-29 years age group in 2012 globally. Overall, it is estimated that during 2012 for each adult who died of suicide there were over 20 others who made suicide attempts.

In 2012, suicide accounted for 1.4% of all deaths worldwide, making it the 15th leading cause of death.

Mental disorders (particularly depression and alcohol use disorders) are a major risk factor for suicide in Europe and North America; however, in Asian countries impulsiveness plays an important role. Suicide is complex with psychological, social, biological, cultural and environmental factors involved.

The International Association for Suicide Prevention (IASP) and the World Health Organization (WHO) are committed to preventing suicide. These organizations recognize World Suicide Prevention Day as an important day in the international calendar. World Suicide Prevention Day brings together individuals and organizations with an interest in suicide prevention, and mobilizes efforts to save lives.

Efforts to prevent suicide have been celebrated on World Suicide Prevention Day – September 10th – each year since 2003. In 2014, the theme of World Suicide Prevention Day is '***Suicide Prevention: One World Connected.***' The theme reflects the fact that connections are important at several levels if we are to combat suicide.

Connectedsness is crucial to individuals who may be vulnerable to suicide. Studies have shown that social isolation can increase the risk of suicide and, conversely, that having strong human bonds can be protective against it. Reaching out to those who have become disconnected from others and offering them support and friendship may be a life-saving act.

Connectedsness can also be understood in terms of clinical care. Mental illness, particularly depression, is an important risk factor for suicide. Internationally, treatments for mental illness have improved, but access to these treatments remains unequal. Primary care providers, often the first port of call for people with mental illness, are not always able to diagnose and treat mental illness. Specialist mental health care providers are not always available, so referral options may be limited. Even when services are available, they are not always sufficiently well coordinated to provide optimal care. People with mental illness often 'fall through the cracks', particularly – but not exclusively – in developing countries.

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Connectedsness and collaboration between services is also important at this level in preventing suicide. The right service or individual clinician must be available at the right time for someone with mental health problems, and must be able to offer and deliver effectively the full range of treatment options.

Finally, connectedness is necessary at a national and international level. Many clinical and non-clinical organizations are working towards the goal of preventing suicide, but their efforts are not always synchronized. World Suicide Prevention Day has proved to be very successful in encouraging organizations to coordinate their efforts and learn from each other. It has also assisted those who have been bereaved by suicide in making themselves heard in discussions about suicide prevention. This has sharpened the focus on activities that are effective in preventing suicide.

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World Suicide Prevention Day in 2014 is significant because it marks the release by the WHO of the World Suicide Report. The report follows the adoption of the Comprehensive Mental Health Action Plan 2013-2020 by the World Health Assembly, which commits all 194 member states to reducing their suicide rates by 10% by 2020.

The World Suicide Report is the most comprehensive, up-to-date record of the current status of suicide prevention internationally.

It outlines the epidemiology of suicide, presenting the most recent data from countries across the world. It discusses major risk and protective factors for suicide, paying particular attention to those which are modifiable. It presents the evidence for key interventions that show promise in reducing suicidal acts. It describes the overarching national suicide prevention strategies that have been introduced in a number of countries, highlighting their common features. It then collates this information and makes recommendations about the future direction of suicide prevention activities in different countries and cultures.

The World Suicide Report will prove to be an invaluable resource for those working to prevent suicide and has a specific focus on informing stakeholders working in policy development and implementation. It will offer lessons for governments in countries where suicide prevention has not yet become a priority on the policy agenda. It will provide guidance for clinical and non-clinical services about potentially useful interventions designed to reduce suicidal behaviour in vulnerable individuals. It will provide an important context for those who have been bereaved by suicide or have thought about suicide themselves, helping them to understand that they are not alone and that there is hope. In this sense, the World Suicide Report reflects the connectedness theme of World Suicide Prevention Day at all levels.

Be part of the connectedness of World Suicide Prevention Day this year. On September 10th, join with others around the globe who are working towards the common goal of preventing suicide. Together, we can shine a spotlight on this major public health problem and ensure that it receives the policy attention that it warrants.

A symbolic activity on World Suicide Prevention Day is IASP's Cycle Around the Globe.
We encourage all countries to connect and join us! <http://goo.gl/M6BQFD>

Download the World Suicide Prevention Day 2014 Suggested Activities Sheet

<http://goo.gl/FaCZki>

Find World Suicide Prevention Day 2014 research resources and guides

Connectedness, Mental Health and Suicide Prevention

<http://goo.gl/0ovDtp>

Join us on the Official World Suicide Prevention Day 2014 Facebook Event Page

<http://goo.gl/b2Z0rt>

Light a Candle Near a Window at 8 PM on World Suicide Prevention Day

<http://goo.gl/mMfY4C>

Download the 2014 World Suicide Prevention Day Toolkit

<http://goo.gl/TEvYHD>