

Suicide Prevention Week to highlight complexity of causes

Suicide is a complex and multi-dimensional problem; there is never only one factor that causes a person to take his own life, but a combination of many factors that can easily go unnoticed by family, friends and coworkers.

The first week of September is National Suicide Prevention Week, intended to expand awareness of the need to increase suicide prevention efforts and effective intervention.

Some risk factors associated with suicide include mental illness, substance abuse, previous suicide attempts, hopelessness, access to lethal means, recent loss of a loved one, unemployment and vulnerability to self-harm.

Protective factors that "buffer" against suicide and suicidal behaviors include high self-esteem, being socially connected, supportive family and friends, and effective problem-solving skills.

Here are a few facts from the American Association of Suicidology:

- Suicide is the 11th leading cause of death in the United States. (Num-



high plains mental health

- plain sense

bers 1-10 are all physical health problems such as heart disease and diabetes, except for no. 5, which is accidents and unintentional injuries. Homicide ranks as number 13.)

- Suicide is the third leading cause of death among 15 to 24-year-olds. Females attempt suicide three times more often than males, but males complete suicide at a rate four times that of females. (Part of the reason is that males tend to use a more lethal means such as a gun.)
- The elderly make up 13 percent of the population but account for almost 25 percent of all suicides. One of the leading causes of suicide among the elderly is depression, often undiagnosed and/or untreated.

The experts who research and study suicide believe that most sui-

cidal individuals do not want to die; they just want to end the emotional pain they are experiencing.

When suicidal intent or risk is detected early, lives can be saved. If you have concerns about a family member, friend or yourself, talk with someone who can help such as your family physician, clergy or mental health professional.

Contributed by Karen Beery, Consultation and Education Department. The views expressed here are those of the individual writer and should not be considered a replacement for seeking professional help.

Mail questions to: High Plains Mental Health Center, Plain Sense, Consultation and Education Department, 208 East Seventh, Hays, Kan. 67601.

Internet site: www.highplains-mentalhealth.com

Suicide is third leading cause of death for ages 15-24

Suicide ranks as the third leading cause of death for young people 15-24 years of age. (Auto accidents and homicide are Nos. 1 and 2.)

Research has shown that the access to and availability of firearms, particularly in the home, is a significant factor in the increase of youth suicide.

Research has shown that most adolescent suicides occur after school hours and in the teen's home.

Suicide can be difficult to predict in young people due to their

tendency to be impulsive. They have not yet had enough experience to know that it takes a period of time to recover from changes, problems and losses in life and that the future will be brighter.

Nor do they have the insight to understand the long-time results their act has on parents, family and friends.

Most adolescent suicide attempts are precipitated by interpersonal conflicts. That is, relationship conflicts with peers, boy/girl-friends or family members.

According to the American As-

sociation of Suicideology, many teenagers who are considering suicide may display one or more of the signs listed below:

- Communication of thoughts of suicide or death in a context of sadness, boredom, hopelessness or negative feelings.
- Presence of a psychiatric disorder such as depression, behavior disorders or substance abuse.
- Impulsive and aggressive behavior, frequent expressions of rage.
- Exposure to another's suicidal behavior.

- Family instability and/or significant family conflict.
- Recent severe stressor such as difficulties in dealing with sexual orientation, unplanned pregnancy or a significant real or anticipated loss.

If you have concerns about a young family member or friend, talk with someone who can help, such as your family physician, clergy or mental health professional.

Contributed by Karen Beery, Consultation and Education Department.

matters of record

District Traffic

The following fines were paid in the Sherman County District Court:

July 12 — Bruce A. Mayo, 43, Longmont, Colo. was fined \$120 for speeding.

Bruce A. Mayo, 43, Longmont, Colo. was fined \$60 for unlawful acts with a vehicle.

July 15 — Stephen P. Moore, 20, Carol Stream, Ill. was fined \$126 for speeding.

Karen S. Winchester, 46, Glen-

wood Springs, Colo. was fined \$120 for speeding.

Jamie N. Abbaticchio, 18, Clarksburg, Md. was fined \$138 for speeding.

Landon J. Shafer, 22, Tribune, was fined \$132 for speeding.

Cruz Sotelo-Gonzalez, 51, Thornton, Colo. was fined \$126 for speeding.

Jennifer Renae Duensing, 22, Tulsa, Okla. was fined \$132 for speeding.

Scott G. Brasher, 20, Pleasant

Grove, Utah was fined \$138 for speeding.

Scott G. Brasher, 20, Pleasant Grove, Utah was fined \$10 for failure to wear a seat belt.

Jesse A. Mcelfresh, 23, Burlington, Kan. was fined \$204 for speeding.

July 16 — Jonathan D. Miller, 33, Grapevine, Texas was fined \$132 for speeding.

Jonathan D. Miller, 33, Grapevine, Texas was fined \$60 for unlawful acts with a vehicle.

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