Central Michigan District Health Department

Promoting Healthy Families, Healthy Communities

Jennifer Morse, MD, MPH, FAAFP
Medical Director

Steve Hall, RS, MS
Health Officer

PRESS RELEASE FOR LOCAL MEDIA

To: Local News Media

From: Central Michigan District Health Department

RE: World Mental Health Day

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World Mental Health Day, October 10, 2020
Suicide Prevention

Central Michigan District Health Department would like to recognize the 2020 World Mental Health Day campaign which aims to increase the awareness of the public health significance of suicide and suicide attempts and to reduce the rate of suicide throughout the world. Every year, nearly 800,000 people take their own life and many more people attempt suicide. Every suicide is a tragedy that affects families, communities and entire countries and has long-lasting effects on the people left behind.

While the link between suicide and mental disorders is well established, many suicides happen impulsively in moments of crisis with a breakdown in the ability to deal with life stresses, such as financial problems, relationship break-up or chronic pain and illness. Suicide rates are also high amongst vulnerable groups who experience discrimination. By far, the strongest risk factor for suicide is a previous suicide attempt.

Added to the risk of suicide and suicide attempts is the fear of COVID-19. While changes to our daily lives such as working from home, unemployment, home-schooling of children, and lack of physical contact with other family members, friends and colleagues, it is important that we look after our mental health as well as our physical health.

Suicides are preventable. There are several measures that can be taken to help prevent suicide and suicide attempts, especially during COVID-19:

- Take breaks from the news and social media.
- Make time to unwind, take deep breaths and use mindfulness.
- Take care of your body: maintain good nutrition, get adequate sleep, avoid alcohol and drugs.
- Connect with others virtually or by phone. It is ok to reach out and ask for help.
- Set goals and review priorities.
- Realize that you are not alone and reach out to others who may feel isolated.

Stigma surrounding mental disorders and suicide makes it difficult for people to seek the help they need. The prevention of suicide has not been adequately addressed due to a lack of awareness of suicide as a major public health problem and the fact that it is taboo in many societies to openly discuss it. Raising community awareness and breaking down the stigma is important for countries to make progress in preventing suicide.

Suicide is a complex issue and, therefore, suicide prevention efforts require coordination and collaboration among multiple sectors of society. These efforts must be comprehensive and integrated as no single approach alone can make an impact on an issue as complex as suicide.

This article has been brought to you by Central Michigan District Health Department, which serves the counties of Arenac, Clare, Gladwin, Isabella, Osceola, and Roscommon. Visit our website at www.cmdhd.org, LIKE Central Michigan District Health Department on Facebook and follow us on Twitter @CMiDHD.

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

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To request an interview, please visit our website (cmdhd.org) and fill out the Media Interview Request Form.

Sources:
World Health Organization (http://www.who.int); World Federation of Mental Health (https://wfmh.global).