


Look for signs of depression and help save a life: Column

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On average, there are 123 suicides per day in the United States. If you or someone you know needs help, call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK. USA TODAY

The suicides of successful celebrities earlier this year has been a stark reminder that more support and understanding are needed for all people that struggle with depression and mental illness — celebrities, every day folks, disadvantaged adults or children and anyone else. Locally, too, many families continue to grieve for family members who take their own lives. Too often, suicides in the recent involved adolescents.

Suicide is the 10th leading cause of death in the nation, with more than 40,000 people across the country dying from suicide annually, according to the National Institute of Mental Health. In 2016, suicide was the second-leading cause of death for people aged 10–34, the highest rank of any other population, as reported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Astor has experienced this first hand, dealing with 59 of suicide attempt in last 12 months.

Communities can make a difference by talking about the signs of mental illness, depression and suicidal tendencies. By sharing information on where to get immediate help to cope with overwhelming feelings of sadness, confusion, loss or thoughts of suicide, communities can help troubled people recognize that they need support and steer them toward recovery.

Let's openly share our stories and step-up our efforts to support those that need our help. Let's put an end to the stigmatism, bullying and lack of understanding by others that causes some adults and teens affected by mental illness, depression or thoughts of suicide to turn away from available professional help and, instead, try to manage on their own, sometimes unsuccessfully. Let's talk openly about our own sadness and anxieties and let our kids know these feelings are normal and need to be acknowledged. Communities must continue to come together in support of people in need through awareness, acceptance, compassion and widespread, readily-available programs in schools, community centers and private settings to provide the comfort, attention and direction needed for hope and healing.

Everyone struggles with emotional wellness. With help, people coping with mental health illness and depression can learn to manage their challenges and lead productive, enjoyable lives.

According to MentalHealth.gov, warning signs of serious concern in people include:

Talking about wanting to die or to kill oneself.

Looking for a way to kill oneself.

Talking about feeling hopeless or having no reason to live.

Talking about feeling trapped or in unbearable pain.

Talking about being a burden to others.

Increasing the use of alcohol or drugs.

Acting anxious or agitated; behaving recklessly.

Sleeping too little or too much.

Withdrawing or feeling isolated.

Showing rage or talking about seeking revenge.

Displaying extreme mood swings.

Specific environmental and personal safeguards can help protect people from suicide, including these from the Suicide Prevention Resource Center:

Effective behavioral health care

Connectedness to individuals, family, community, and social institutions

Life skills (including problem solving skills and coping skills, ability to adapt to change)

Self-esteem and a sense of purpose or meaning in life

Cultural, religious, or personal beliefs that discourage suicide

If you or someone you know feels overwhelmed, depressed or suicidal, help is available through the following agencies:

Dutchess County HELPLINE:

Call or text mental health professionals at (845) 485-9700; toll-free (877) 485-9700

<http://www.co.dutchess.ny.us/CountyGov/Departments/DBCH/HDIndex.htm>

Dutchess County Stabilization Center

Call or text, (845) 485-9700

24/7 walk-in facility at 230 North Road in Poughkeepsie for people feeling overwhelmed by mental health, substance use or other life issues.

<http://www.co.dutchess.ny.us/CountyGov/Departments/DBCH/27748.htm>

MidHudson Regional Hospital

Emergency Psychiatric Care
Call (845) 431-8892

<https://www.midhudsonregional.org/behavioral-health>

United Way, Hudson Valley Region 211

Home-Based Crisis Intervention Services

Toll-free 800-724-0699

<http://www.hudson211.org/zf/taxonomy/detail/id/521324>

Mental Health America of Dutchess County

Programs for people with a mental illness, their families and others.

(845) 473-2500; info@mhadutchess.org

<https://mhadutchess.org/>

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

Toll-free 1-800-273-TALK (8255), 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The service is available to everyone.

The deaf and hard of hearing can contact the Lifeline via TTY at 1-800-799-4889. All calls are confidential.

<https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>

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