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## **National Prevention Week: Suicide Prevention - Important Signs To Know**

May 13-17 is National Prevention Week and is dedicated to increasing public awareness of, and take action around, mental and/or substance use disorders. Friday, May 17 is Suicide Prevention Day.

It is estimated that only one in four suicides are reported and there are approximately 25 attempts for each death. The numbers are staggering as this public health concern continues to increase.

In Michigan, suicide is the tenth leading cause of death for all ages. Suicide is the second leading cause of death among persons aged 15-34 years. On average, one person dies by suicide every seven hours. More than twice as many people die by suicide annually than by homicide.

In 2017, MDCH reported that Shiawassee County had 19 deaths by suicide, which is an increase from the previous year. Most suicides were completed by individuals between the age 25-74.

Although there are suicides that occur without any warnings, most people who are suicidal do give warnings. By learning to recognize the signs of someone who is at risk of hurting themselves, you may be able to prevent the suicide of someone you care about.

Some risk factors vary with age, gender, or ethnic group and may occur in combination or change over time. Some observable warning signs of suicide are:

- Loss of interest in school and regular activities
- Withdrawal from friends and family
- Feelings of hopelessness, worthlessness, self-blame, or guilt
- Unexpected rage, anger, irritable mood
- Anxiety, emotional pain and inner tension
- Feeling that there is no way out; need to escape
- Talking about not being around—nothing matters anymore and there is nothing to live for

- Sleep problems
- Talking about death and threats of suicide
- Prior suicide attempt
- Prior family history of mental disorder or substance abuse
- Prior family history of suicide
- Family violence, including physical or sexual abuse
- Incarceration
- Exposure to the suicidal behavior of others, such a family members, peers
- Make a plan: Giving away prized possessions, sudden or impulsiveness to obtain a means of killing oneself such as poisons, medications or firearms.

If you notice signs of behavior change and think someone is suicidal, acknowledge that you are aware of a change and do not leave this person alone. Try to get the person to seek immediate help by either talking to their Primary Care Physician or take them to the nearest hospital emergency room. If you or a friend is in crisis, call the Shiawassee Health & Wellness at 989.723.6791 or the National Suicide Prevention Crisis line at 1.800.273.TALK. Texting is also available at 741-741.

To learn more about helping our young people who may be showing symptoms of mental illness or in a mental health crisis, Shiawassee Health & Wellness is offering a Youth Mental Health First Aid training. The 8-hour course will be held on June 5<sup>th</sup> at Shiawassee Health & Wellness located at 1555 Industrial Drive in Owosso. Participants will learn how to provide the initial help to a person showing symptoms of mental illness or in a mental health crisis until appropriate professional or other help can be engaged. To learn more about the training, go to [www.shiabewell.org](http://www.shiabewell.org) or call 989-723-6791.

Submitted by: Penny Corbin, Public Relations & Prevention Specialist