



I A S P

International Association for Suicide Prevention

September 10, 2016

World Suicide Prevention Day

Connect. Communicate. Care.

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The World Health Organization estimates that over 800,000 people die by suicide each year – that's one person every 40 seconds. Up to 25 times as many again make a suicide attempt. The tragic ripple effect means that there are many, many more people who have been bereaved by suicide or have been close to someone who has tried to take his or her own life. And this is happening in spite of the fact that suicide is preventable.

'Connect, communicate, care' is the theme of the 2016 World Suicide Prevention Day. These three words are at the heart of suicide prevention.

Connect

Fostering connections with those who have lost a loved one to suicide or have been suicidal themselves is crucial to furthering suicide prevention efforts. Although every individual suicide is different, there are some common lessons to be learned. Those who have been on the brink of suicide themselves can help us understand the complex interplay of events and circumstances that led them to that point, and what saved them or helped them to choose a more life-affirming course of action. Those who have lost someone to suicide, or supported someone who was suicidal, can provide insights into how they moved forwards on their journey. The sheer numbers of people who have been affected by suicide would make this a formidable network.

Of course, these connections should be two-way. There will often be times when those who have been bereaved by suicide, and those who might be feeling suicidal themselves, need support. Keeping an eye out for them and checking that they are okay could make all the difference. Social connectedness reduces the risk of suicide, so being there for someone who has become disconnected can be a life-saving act. Connecting them with formal and informal supports may also help to prevent suicide. Individuals, organisations and communities all have a responsibility here.

Communicate

Open communication is vital if we are to combat suicide. In many communities, suicide is shrouded in silence or spoken of only in hushed tones. We need to discuss suicide as we would any other public health issue if we are to dispel myths about it and reduce the stigma surrounding it. This is not to say that we shouldn't exercise necessary caution; we don't want to normalise suicide either. Careful, considered messages about suicide and its prevention are warranted, as is an awareness of how different groups of individuals may receive and interpret this information.

Equipping people to communicate effectively with those who might be vulnerable to suicide is an important part of any suicide prevention strategy. Broaching the subject of suicide is difficult, and these sorts of conversations are often avoided. There are some simple tips that can help, however. Most of these relate to showing compassion and empathy, and listening in a non-judgemental way. People who have come through an episode of extreme suicidal thinking often say that sensitively-managed conversations with others helped them on their course to recovery.

The media also have an important role to play in suicide prevention. Some types of reporting on suicide (e.g., prominent and/or explicit stories) have been shown to be associated with 'spikes' in suicide rates, but others (e.g., those that describe mastery of suicidal crises) have been shown to have a protective effect. Media recommendations have been developed by the International Association for Suicide Prevention and the World Health Organization to assist journalists in getting stories right. Please see: <http://goo.gl/4qVhUp>

Care

All the connecting and communicating in the world will have no effect without the final ingredient – care. We need to make sure that policy-makers and planners care enough about suicide prevention to make it a priority, and to fund it at a level that is commensurate with its significance as a public health problem.



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We need to make sure that clinicians and other service providers care enough about it to make suicide prevention their core business. And we need to make sure that communities care enough about it to be able to identify and support those who may be at heightened risk.

Most of all, we need to ensure that we are caring ourselves. We need to look out for others who may be struggling, and let them tell their story in their own way and at their own pace. Those who have been affected by suicide have much to teach us in this regard.

Connect, communicate and care on World Suicide Prevention Day

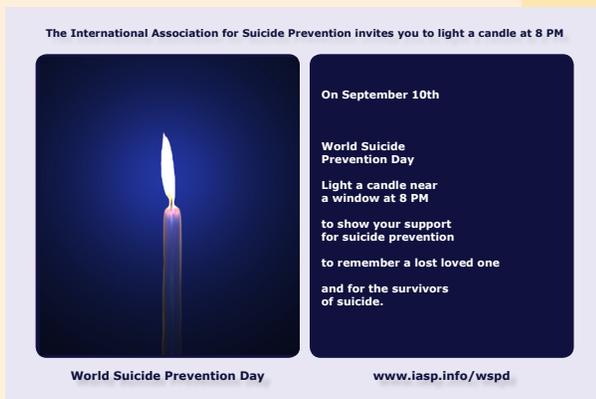
On September 10th, join with others around the world who are working towards the common goal of preventing suicide. Check in on someone you may be concerned about, and start a caring conversation with them, asking them how they're going. Investigate ways of connecting with others who are trying to prevent suicide in your community, your country, or internationally. Show your support by taking part in the International Association for Suicide Prevention's Cycle Around the Globe

The first World Suicide Prevention Day was held in 2003 and was an initiative of the International Association for Suicide Prevention and the World Health Organization (WHO). Since then, World Suicide Prevention Day has taken place on 10th September each year.

Please view the **WHO Fact Sheet on suicide** at: <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs398/en/>

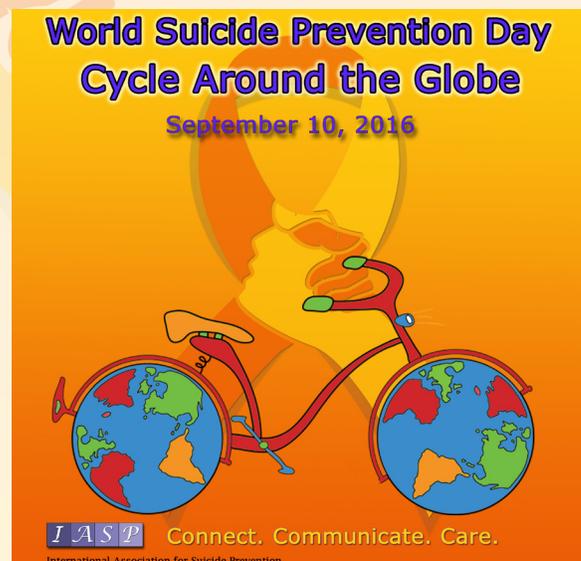
Light a Candle near a Window at 8 PM on World Suicide Prevention Day: <https://goo.gl/9Ic1en>

Ride with us! World Suicide Prevention Day **Cycle Around the Globe**: <https://goo.gl/csdyvG>



Download the World Suicide Prevention Day 2016 **Suggested Activities**: <https://goo.gl/DKUno0>

Find World Suicide Prevention Day 2016 **resources and guides** relating to the theme of connecting, communicating and caring in suicide prevention: <https://goo.gl/qY4YhE>



Download the **World Suicide Prevention Day Toolkit**: <https://goo.gl/NNdQ4w>