

Momentum – September 2021

Newsletter – Member

Caring for a loved one in crisis

When a loved one is at risk

Sometimes a person who's integral to our life will experience an emotional or substance use crisis that puts their well-being at risk. (With just under 50,000 Americans dying from suicide annually, such risks are real.) If your loved one appears to be traveling a self-destructive path, try to react with compassion, kindness and support.

- Identify warning signs. A person may be feeling suicidal if they mention having lost hope, feeling unbearable discomfort, wanting life to end, being a burden to or withdrawing from others, and/or being deeply depressed.
- Gently ask them to talk. Studies show that asking and talking about someone's suicidal feelings—in a non-judgmental way—helps generate relief, not further risk.
- If you believe someone might harm themselves, strive to remove potential suicide means such as weapons or stockpiled medications.

Live Webinar—Join us online Wednesday, September 8 for *Supporting Others Through Their Mental Health and Substance Use Concerns*. Register [here](#).

Tips for tough talks

- **Make sure to be there.** It's vital to stop, listen and truly hear what the other person is feeling. Ask how you can help. If they're clearly struggling but aren't yet ready to talk, let them know you're available to listen anytime.
- **Ask the tough questions.** Sometimes, preventing suicide involves having difficult conversations with the people who matter most to us. Don't shy from asking questions such as, "Do you have thoughts or plans about suicide?"
- **Your words matter.** People typically feel less depressed, less self-destructive, less overwhelmed and more hopeful after speaking to someone who cares, listens without judgment, expresses concern and offers help.

Additional Sources: National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, National Alliance on Mental Illness, Prevention.com.

Mind Your Mental Health

September is Suicide Prevention Awareness Month

This observance raises awareness and connects individuals experiencing suicidal ideation to treatment services, in addition to offering support to those previously affected by suicide.

- Suicidal thoughts can affect anyone regardless of age, gender or background. Suicide often stems from an untreated mental health condition.
- If a person seems in danger of hurting themselves, call 911 immediately.
- If you're concerned about a suicide but don't know what to do, call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255). Trained counselors are available 24/7 to speak with you or your loved one.
- If you're uncomfortable talking by phone, send a text to the National Alliance on Mental Illness at 741-741 for free crisis support via text message from a crisis counselor.
- Reassure the at-risk individual with words such as, "I might not be able to understand exactly how you feel, but I care about you and want to help."

Visit www.MagellanHealthcare.com/About/MYMH or call your program for confidential mental health resources.

Working on Wellness

Enjoy National Family Health & Fitness Day

- On Saturday, September 25, this observance emphasizes that being active regularly can stave off the harmful physical risks that accompany inactive lifestyles for all ages.
- Parents should serve as role models for being active and provide children with opportunities for increased physical activity, while limiting sedentary pursuits such as TV, computer and smartphone time. Exercising together can lift everyone up.

Showing Support

Treatment for severe depression is crucial

- Many external factors can lead a person to consider self-harm—from bullying to relationship breakups to financial crises. However, the internal impact on a person's emotions—depression—can drive self-destructive thoughts.
- While securing the safety of an at-risk person is vital, their depression also requires attention. Although some people resist obtaining depression treatment, it's just as important as treatment for other medical conditions.

Managing Work-Life Balance

Add some autumn activities and healthy eating

Get ready for a fun fall. Plan some enjoyable weekend activities with your family so you can all de-stress. As a group, try a weekend camping trip, a long bike ride, a woodsy hiking adventure or a river kayak excursion. Find a local ranch that offers horseback riding. Back at home, make a new commitment to healthy eating, and do some cooking together. Pursuing health goals as a family can be fun!

Poster

September 10 is World Suicide Prevention Day

Sometimes an emotional or substance use crisis puts someone you love at risk for self-harming thoughts and behaviors.

- Learn the warning signs of potential suicide.
- Talk compassionately and non-judgmentally to the individual; let them know you care and are there to help them.
- Recognize when it's time for professional crisis intervention.

Digital Sign

Show compassion when a loved one is suffering

When someone you care about is in crisis, truly listen to their expressions of distress.

- Actively listen without judging the other person.
- Express empathy and try to make them feel more secure and comfortable.
- Tell them that although you might not be able to understand exactly how they feel, you care and want to help.