

Office of Suicide Prevention Newsletter

With Help Comes Hope

In This Issue

Social Media and
Suicide

The Impacts of COVID-19
on Suicide

National Suicide
Prevention Awareness
Month



Maryland
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH



Social Media and Suicide

Suicide is one of the top leading causes of death worldwide and is one of the top five causes of death in adolescents, according to the [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#). As a global health issue, it is important to practice safe reporting on social media, as our reach and influence expand farther than ever. [Research](#) shows that irresponsible reporting has been associated with increased suicide risk. When a suicide occurs, check on loved ones and provide information on resources such as crisis hotlines. Do not share articles that do not follow the reporting recommendations on suicide. Some recommendations include: avoid overdramatizing the event, do not provide exact details or photos of location or method, and do not oversimplify the cause of death. You should continue to inform without dramatization, share positive stories of hope and recovery, share resources, and normalize talking about suicide. Check out our [Safe Reporting Toolkit](#).



The Impacts of COVID-19 on Suicide

The coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic has been associated with mental health challenges related to the morbidity and mortality caused by the disease and the additional distress caused by physical distancing and stay-at-home orders. Research shows a considerable increase in reported symptoms of anxiety and depression in the United States during April–June of 2020. Preliminary data from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is also showing an increase in symptoms of a trauma- and stressor-related disorder (TSRD) related to the pandemic, increase start or continuous substance use to cope with stress or emotions related to COVID-19, and an increase in the percentage of individuals having seriously considered suicide. We also know that COVID-19 impacted different racial groups with varying degrees of severity, minority groups dying at faster rates. Concerns have been expressed that, at their most extreme, these consequences could manifest as increased suicide rates.

Preliminary data is actually showing a 5.6% decrease in suicide rates during the pandemic. Experts are still studying the causes for the decrease in suicide rates but some researchers suggest the increased messages of support and an increase in the availability of telehealth services and other efforts to turn around the nation's suicide problem may have contributed to these new statistics. The CDC has not yet released 2020 suicide data by state, age, or race and ethnicity. The nation's mental health crisis is far from over. While optimistic, experts are still concerned about the long-term effects isolation and economic turmoil will have on our mental health.

Fast Fact

While deaths increased 17.7% overall in the U.S. last year, suicides decreased for the third consecutive year, according to preliminary CDC data. Total deaths by suicide decreased 5.6%, from 47,511 in 2019, to 44,834 in 2020, according to early data.

Suicide deaths decreased during the COVID-19 pandemic.

September is National Suicide Prevention Awareness Month

September has been declared National Suicide Prevention Awareness Month since 2008. This is a time to share resources and stories in an effort to shed light on this highly taboo and stigmatized topic.



We use this month to reach out to those affected by suicide, raise awareness and connect individuals with suicidal ideation to treatment services. It is also important to ensure that individuals, friends and families have access to the resources they need to discuss suicide prevention. This September, you can make a difference and support those impacted by suicide. Here are a few ways you can participate:

- Share your story on social media, at an event or with your community.
- Download our [toolkit](#) and change the conversation about suicide.
- Educate yourself and others about the [risk factors and warning signs of suicide](#).
- Take a [suicide prevention gatekeeper training](#).
- Encourage your county leaders to declare Suicide Prevention Month in September locally.
- Join the conversation in your community and online on September 10, World Suicide Prevention Day
- Volunteer virtually at your [local crisis center](#) and help spread hope and awareness.
- Share information about resources that can help survivors after a suicide loss.

Safe Storage Map

Marylanders to Prevent Gun Violence and the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health developed an online map to help community members seeking local options for temporary, voluntary firearm storage. Out-of-home gun storage can be especially helpful to persons in crisis or at risk for suicide. The mission behind this project is to reduce gun violence in Maryland through policy development, empowerment through strategic education, and effective advocacy at the community and legislative levels.

View the map [here](#).



Updates from the Field

Identification of Suicide Attempt Risk Factors in a National US Survey Using Machine Learning

A new [study](#) identified the most significant risk factors for suicide include: The most important factors included previous suicidal ideation or behavior, feeling downhearted, doing activities less carefully or accomplishing less because of emotional problems, younger age, lower educational achievement, and recent financial crisis.

Trends in US Emergency Department Visits Before and During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Researchers found that US emergency department (ED) visits for mental health, suicide attempts, overdose, and violence outcomes increased during the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. [Read more.](#)

Suicide Mortality by State

This CDC resource provides up-to-date data of suicide deaths rankings by state. Check out the tool [here](#).

Opportunities for Research on the Treatment of Substance Use Disorders in the Context of COVID-19

A new [article](#) investigates opportunities to evaluate which new clinical telehealth practices should remain after COVID-19, which should be reserved for crises, and which ones are possibly harmful.

Association of US Nurse and Physician Occupation With Risk of Suicide

This [article](#) suggests during the COVID-19 pandemic, suicide risk compared with the general population was significantly increased for nurses but not for physicians.

Adaptive Screener May Help Identify Youth at Risk of Suicide

Researchers have developed a computerized adaptive screener to identify youth at risk for attempting suicide. Read more [here](#).

Need to Talk?

Maryland's Helpline offers 24/7 call, chat, and text support for Marylanders in need of help, guidance, and information related to a behavioral health concern. Trained call specialists can provide crisis intervention, risk assessment for suicide, homicide or overdose prevention, and assistance linking to community behavioral health providers and accessing community resources. To get connected to Maryland's Helpline, call 211 and press 1, text your zip code to 898-211, or visit 211md.org.

211
Maryland

Get connected. Get help.
Call 211, press 1



Training Snapshot

Lunch N' Learn: Individual, Family, and Community Resilience

This presentation focused on what Resilience is, how we can help build resilience skills with our clients and how we can foster resilience within their family systems.

With over 200 attendees, participants learned the core concepts of resilience and how neuroplasticity can aid in building resilience in clients.

Lunch N' Learn's are held on the third Thursday of each month.

Announcements

COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions

BHA has released FAQ guides to help behavioral health treatment providers navigate challenges brought on by COVID-19. The FAQs can be found on [BHA's coronavirus webpage](#), along with additional mental health and substance use resources.

Governor's Commission 2021

The 2021 Commission meeting schedule is available, and you can look at past meeting agendas and minutes.

Sign Up to Receive the Weekly Scoop

Every Friday, we send out the Weekly Scoop with news about our program, training opportunities, new research from the field, and more. Sign up [here](#).

Seeking Lunch & Learn Proposals

Submit your proposals for our Lunch & Learn Series, hosted the third Thursday of every month from 12pm to 1pm. Workshops on topics including suicide prevention, mental health/wellness, trauma, and COVID-19 are being considered. [Submit your proposal](#).



Events

JULY

07/05/2021	S.A.V.E. Suicide Prevention Training	Register
07/06/2021	Talking about Suicide: Ten Tools - online training FOR ANYONE	Register
07/07/2021	Strategies to Overcome and Avoid Recidivism (SOOAR) - QPR Suicide Prevention Gatekeeper Training	Register
07/16/2021	Question, Prevent, Refer (QPR) Webinar	Register
07/28/2021	Strategies and Interventions to Reduce Suicide: A Workshop- Second Webinar	Register

AUGUST

08/01/2021	Healing Black Minds - African American Mental Health Awareness Discussion	Register
08/01/2021	Overcoming Loneliness and Depression	Register
08/11/2021	Mental Health and Suicide Awareness Training	Register

SEPTEMBER

09/07/2021	Know the Signs Presentation	Register
09/09/2021	Question, Prevent, Refer (QPR) Webinar	Register
09/09/2021	Mental Health and Resiliency Speaker Series: Suicide Prevention	Register
09/15/2021	Governor's Commission for Suicide Prevention Meeting	Information
09/23/2021	Mental Health and Resiliency Speaker Series: Managing Suicide in the Elderly	Register
09/30/2021	Mental Health and Resiliency Speaker Series: Veterans and Suicide	Register

Fast Fact:

Keep Up With Us

Subscribe to our [email distribution list](#)

Visit our [website](#)

Follow us on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), and [Instagram](#)

About The Office of Suicide Prevention

Maryland Department of Health's Office of Suicide Prevention provides a continuum of suicide prevention training, resources and technical assistance to advance the development of a comprehensive suicide prevention and early intervention service system for youth and young adults.

Behavioral Health Administration Mission

The Maryland Department of Health's Behavioral Health Administration will, through publicly-funded services and supports, promote recovery, resiliency, health and wellness for individuals who have or are at risk for emotional, substance-related, addictive and/or psychiatric disorders to improve their ability to function effectively in their communities.

