



Maryland Suicide Prevention and Early Intervention Network Newsletter

WITH HELP COMES HOPE

November 21 is International Survivors of Suicide Loss Day

It's estimated that each person who dies by suicide leaves behind an average of 125 people who are "suicide survivors." At least six of these survivors are significantly impacted by the loss and are left grieving and struggling to understand.

International Survivors of Suicide Loss Day (or Survivor Day) was created in 1999 after former Senator Harry Reid introduced a resolution to the United States Senate after he lost his father to suicide. It was determined that Survivor Day would always fall on the Saturday before Thanksgiving, as the holidays are often a difficult time for suicide loss survivors.

Survivor Day events provide a place for survivors of suicide loss to come together to find connection, understanding and hope through their shared experience. Last year, the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP) hosted 417 total events, including 49 international sites in 26 countries.

Resources for survivors:

- [AFSP: International Survivors of Suicide Loss Day](#)
- [Documentaries](#)
- [AAS: Helping Survivors of Suicide](#)
- [Clinician Survivor Task Force](#)
- [Alliance of Hope for suicide loss survivors](#)
- [Friends for Survival](#)
- [Healing After a Suicide Loss](#)
- [Survivors of Suicide Loss Factsheet](#)



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.



Get connected. Get help.
Call 211, press 1

Self-Care During the Holiday Season

The holiday season can be a struggle when expectations are high, stress is elevated, and disrupted routines can feel overwhelming. In a 2014 [survey](#) conducted by NAMI, 25% of respondents with a diagnosed mental illness reported that the holidays make their condition “a lot” worse. Be prepared for this holiday season by learning to recognize your personal triggers, such as financial pressures or personal demands so you can combat them before they lead to a crisis.

- **Plan Ahead:** Identify stressful times and have a plan to manage with activities to distract yourself and someone to ask for help.
- **Self-Care:** Pay attention to your eating, sleeping, and relaxation time.
- **Keep Expectations Manageable:** Be realistic. Make a list and prioritize the important activities.
- **Remember Fun,** not perfection!
- **Spend time** with supportive and caring people.
- **Contact** a professional if needed.



Graphic by: Arbor Place

This holiday season may be uniquely stressful and difficult with ongoing isolation. Considering the health risks, some celebrations may need to be altered and creative celebration should be considered. The CDC created holiday celebration [recommendations](#) to help families make decisions on how to celebrate safely this year. Here are a few:

- Video chat during holiday meals
- Dining outdoors (weather permitting)
- Neighborhood decorating contest
- Holiday scavenger hunt
- Homemade gifts/decorations
- Handwritten cards
- Holiday movie marathon
- Holiday package drop-offs for family and friends who are isolating
- Holiday volunteering ([local opportunities](#))

Resource Spotlight: notOK

The notOK app was developed by brother and sister duo, Hannah and Charlie Lucas, after Hannah developed severe anxiety and depression following a diagnosis of Postural Orthostatic Tachycardia Syndrome (POTS). When Hannah had a panic attack or trouble asking for help, Charlie wanted to find a way she could reach out without having to ask. When in crisis, many people have difficulty communicating their needs to friends and loved ones. Social support can help people with mental health conditions and is a protective factor for suicide.

The notOK App is a free app that takes the guesswork out of asking for help when you're feeling vulnerable. It will notify your trusted contacts that they've been selected as your support group, so when the time comes and you need to reach out, you'll just have to open the app and press the large, red notOK button.

Learn more:
<https://www.notokapp.com>



TRAINING SNAPSHOT

Racism & Mental Health Series

The new Lunch & Learn series builds on the conversation started during the First Annual Racism and Mental Health Symposium. The series will take place on the first Thursday of the month starting November 5, with “*Life is Precious: Preventing Suicidal Behavior in Latina Adolescents in a Culturally-Competent Manner.*”

32nd Annual Suicide Prevention Conference

Maryland’s 32nd Annual Suicide Prevention Conference was held virtually for the first time ever on October 7. Webinar recordings can be found on our website.



FAST FACTS

8.9%

Nationwide, 8.9% of students had attempted suicide 1 or more times.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Read [Suicidal Ideation and Behaviors Among High School Students- YRBS, 2019](#)

Suicide Risk Among Adolescents and Young Adults

Last spring, as the COVID-19 pandemic created significant changes in our daily lives, the impact on youth and young adults was acute. The sudden closing of schools and transition to social distancing had a unique impact on students during a time when social interaction is paramount in development. In a [survey](#) conducted this summer by Active Minds, college students indicated the most common ways COVID-19 has impacted their lives include: stress or anxiety (91%), disappointment or sadness (81%), loneliness or isolation (80%), financial setback (48%) and relocation (56%).

While the impact of COVID-19 on suicide risk is still being determined, the identified suicide risk factors for adolescents include:

- Recent or serious loss
- Mental illness (mood disorder)
- Prior suicide attempts
- Struggling with sexual orientation
- A family history of suicide
- Lack of social support
- Bullying
- Access to lethal means
- Alcohol and other substance use disorder
- Stigma associated with asking for help
- Barriers to accessing services

In 2018, suicide accounted for approximately 33.9% or approximately one of every three injury-related deaths among high school aged youths (14–18). In Maryland intentional self-harm (suicide) is the third leading cause of death for individuals age 15–24 years old. The Center for Disease Control recently released a [report](#) on State Suicide Rates Among Adolescents and Young Adults aged 10-24, 2000-2018. Nationally, the suicide rate among persons aged 10–24 was

statistically stable from 2000 to 2007 and then increased 57.4%, from 6.8 per 100,000 in 2007 to 10.7 in 2018. There was a significant increase in the suicide rate in 42 states, including Maryland which had the lowest suicide rate increase at 21.7% (from 6.0 to 7.3 per 100,000). Comparatively, New Hampshire had the highest suicide rate increase at 110% (from 7.0 to 14.7 per 100,000).

This data shows that the suicide rate was increasing among adolescents and young adults prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. While we are continuing to live in the “new normal” of the pandemic, this could exacerbate known risk factors. For example, serious loss is a risk factor and due to health concerns, funerals have been limited and grieving has occurred in isolation. Social isolation has strained access to social support and has even created a new challenge to accessing services. The [survey](#) conducted by Active Minds also found that 55% of students said that they would not know where to go if they or someone they knew needed professional mental health services right away.

Knowing where to find help when you need it is important. [Active Minds](#) has chapters on college campuses nationally and can help connect students to resources and with mental health advocacy. [NAMI Teens & Young Adults](#) provides online information and education for teens and young adults. [American Foundation for Suicide Prevention](#): Teens and Suicide: What Parents Should Know helps parents understand suicide warning signs and find resources. [MDMindHealth](#) is a local resource that is appropriate for teens and young adults to receive regular supportive messages and local resources.

Updates from the Field

Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance (2019)

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention released the 2019 [report](#) of the Youth Risk Behavior Survey. The report details health risk behaviors practiced during adolescence because these behaviors often persist into adulthood and contribute to the leading causes of morbidity and mortality in the United States.

State Suicide Rates Among Adolescents and Young Adults

The National Vital Statistics Report released this [report](#) about the change in suicide rates between 2007-2009 and 2016-2018. Nationally the suicide rate was stable increased from 2007 to 2018.

Acceptance by Peers Reduced Risk of Suicide Attempts among API LGBTQ Youth, Report Finds

New [research](#) from the Trevor Project found that peer acceptance of LGBTQ Asian Pacific Islander (API) youth reduced suicide rates among these youth by 50%.

Suicide Prevention Resource Center

SPRC [announced](#) they have been funded for another 5 years, with new partnerships between the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center, University of Oklahoma Outreach Southwest Prevention Center, and Education Development Center.

Mental Health, Substance Use, and Suicidal Ideation during the COVID-19 Pandemic

This [report](#) from the CDC details a survey conducted in June 2020, in which adults reported considerably elevated adverse mental health conditions associated with COVID-19.

Early, Equitable, and Trauma Responsive Care for Chronic Pain and Mental Health

The [report](#) by Mental Health America addresses mental health and co-occurring chronic conditions to create better resources and supports.

Promoting Psychological Health and Suicide Prevention among Older Adults during COVID-19

SPRC recently released this [fact sheet](#) on how COVID-19 is impacting older adults and screening tools for this population.

Governor's Challenge to Prevent Suicide Among Service Members, Veterans, and their Families

Maryland is a participating member of the [challenge](#) which is an initiative with SAMHSA and the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to implement best practices for suicide prevention among service members, veterans and their families.

Frequent Mental Distress Among Adults, by Disability Status, Disability Type, and Selected Characteristics

This CDC weekly [report](#) details the frequency of mental distress in adults with and without disabilities based on BRFSS data.

#BeThere Campaign

The National Action Alliance and its partners united around existing suicide prevention [campaigns](#) to continue to educate and promote suicide prevention to the public.

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.

Apply for Governor's Commission on Suicide Prevention

We have an opening on the [Commission](#) for a young adult (someone who is between the ages of 18 to 25) and a former or current member of the armed forces. All applicants will need to undergo a vetting process before being considered for appointment. The application can be found [here](#).

Seeking Lunch & Learn Proposals

Submit your proposals for Lunch & Learn Series, hosted the 3rd Thursday of every month from 12 pm to 1 pm. Workshops on topics of suicide prevention, mental health/wellness, trauma, COVID-19, etc. are being considered. Please complete this [form](#).

Sign Up to Receive the Weekly Suicide Prevention 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](#).

First Annual Racism & Mental Health Symposium

The First Annual Racism & Mental Health Symposium was hosted on September 15, the recorded workshops can be viewed on our [website](#).

Events

November

November 5	Lunch & Learn: Life is Precious- Preventing Suicidal Behavior in Latina Adolescents in a Culturally-Competent Manner	Register
November 6	Part 1: Grief Therapy with Suicide Loss Survivors: Theory and Techniques	Register
November 9	Reducing Youth Suicide	Register
November 10	MHA: Youth Mental Health First Aid	Information
November 10	Virtual QPR: Question, Persuade, Refer	Register
November 11	Understanding Trauma in African American Women	Register
November 12	SOS Suicide Prevention for Peer-Assisted Recovery	Register
November 13	Part 2: Grief Therapy with Suicide Loss Survivors: Theory and Techniques	Register
November 18	Governor's Commission on Suicide Prevention Meeting	Register
November 19	Lunch & Learn: Self-Disclosure - Is It an Ethical Mistake or an Intervention?	Register
November 21	AFSP: International Survivors of Suicide Loss Day- Maryland and Delaware State	Register

December

December 1	Trauma Informed Suicide Prevention: Leading School District, County & State Systems - Part 1: Policy	Register
December 7	Trauma Informed Suicide Prevention: Leading School District, County & State Systems - Part 2: Workforce Development	Register
December 8	Virtual QPR: Question, Persuade, Refer	Register
December 10	Core (Adult) Mental Health First Aid®	Information
December 14	Trauma Informed Suicide Prevention: Leading School District, County & State Systems – Part 3: Collaboration and Risk Assessment	Register
December 14	Crisis Awareness Training	Register

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About MD-SPIN

Maryland's Suicide Prevention and Early Intervention Network (MD-SPIN) 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. MD-SPIN will increase the number of youth, ages 10-24, identified, referred and receiving quality behavioral health services, with a focus on serving high risk youth populations (LGBTQ, transition age, veterans and military families, youth with emotional and behavioral concerns) and in target settings (schools, colleges/universities, juvenile services facilities, primary care, emergency departments).

Behavioral Health Administration Mission

The Maryland Department of Health (MDH) Behavioral Health Administration (BHA) will develop an integrated process for planning, policy and services to ensure a coordinated quality system of care is available to individuals with behavioral health conditions. The BHA will, through publicly-funded services and support, promote recovery, resiliency, health and wellness for individuals who have or are at risk for emotional, substance related, addictive and/or psychiatric disorders.

