

NOT ALL WOUNDS ARE VISIBLE – Mental Health > Anxiety >> Depression >>> Suicide

Even though we all have negative thoughts sometime, if they cycle through our mind over and over again, it can cause problems. Suffering from anxiety can leave you feeling helpless, worthless, or diminish your interest in activities you typically enjoy. This can take an emotional toll, often resulting in depression symptoms. There's no explanation as to why anxiety and depression co-exist, according to the [Anxiety and Depression Association of America](#), but studies have shown that they often do. They have similar symptoms and can be difficult to tell apart. Even if anxiety is your primary struggle, potential depression and suicidal thoughts could result if untreated.

Clinical depression, or major depression, is more than just feeling sad. Depression is a medical illness with many causes, such as inability of the brain to regulate mood, genetic, stressful life events, medications, and problems with the chemicals in your brain. This chemical imbalance may affect how you feel, think and act. There is no reliable test to check for chemical imbalance. Recognizing depression is through changes in behaviors, feelings or mood, daily activities, eating and sleeping habits, or thought processes.

Lack of treatment of anxiety or major depression can result in physical illnesses, and/or self-harm behaviors. Depression carries a high risk of suicide. This is the worst, but very real outcome, of untreated or under-treated depression. Research shows that up to 90% of people who die from suicide have a treatable mental illness including intense anxiety, depression, or substance abuse disorder.

Suicide is a serious problem in Wisconsin and occurs among all groups of people. Wisconsin's rates have been above or equal to the nation's average for at least a decade. The majority of suicide deaths are by firearms, followed by poisoning and suffocation. The Department of Health Services data for Wisconsin reported that 887 Wisconsinites died by suicide in 2018, down from 918 in 2017 (the highest number reported in 30 years of record keeping). Suicide numbers were increased in rural northern and western Wisconsin. Higher rates in males and youth were unchanged. In 2017 the highest number of suicide deaths was in those aged 55 – 59, and is the second leading cause of death in 15 - 24 year olds. Women have double the number of suicide attempts than males, but males are 3 times more likely to complete suicide. Suicide causes unimaginable pain, suffering, and loss to individuals, families, and communities.

Only one-half of youth ages 15 – 24 contemplating suicide will tell anyone. Of those who tell someone, 75% will turn to a friend in a time of crisis. Based on this, the campaign ***Seize the Awkward*** was created by several groups aimed at educating young adults about mental health, encouraging young adults to create a safe space for their friends to share more, and teach them how to have conversations and support a friend in need. Another campaign is ***#bethe1to*** (Ask. Keep them safe. Be there. Help them connect. Follow up.) aimed at education about suicide prevention, and showing how to take action to make an impact in someone's life.

Suicide continues to grow as a public health issue in Wisconsin. Support is needed to increase suicide prevention efforts in the state. ***Suicide is preventable*** with education, treatment and support. Because suicide is such a complex public health problem, the Surgeon General recommends that we engage in prevention strategies community by community to be effective. **Suicide prevention is everybody's business!!**

References for more information:

seizetheawkward.org

#bethe1to.com (be the 1 to save a life)

cdc.gov

samhsa.gov (substance abuse and mental health services admin)

dhs.wisconsin.gov (department of health services)

mhawisconsin.org (Mental Health America of Wisconsin)