



Connie Beck, Director
Social Services | Public Health | Mental Health

news release

Sept. 7, 2018

Community partners are 'Working Together to Prevent Suicide'

This year's Suicide Prevention Month theme is "Working Together to Prevent Suicide." The Humboldt County Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS) is working with community and tribal partners to host events and offer trainings that teach participants how to recognize suicidal thoughts and behaviors, and refer those at risk to professional resources.

The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention in Humboldt County will hold the third annual Out of the Darkness Walk at the Arcata Plaza on Sept. 9. Registration starts at 9 a.m., and the walk begins at 10.

This month's trainings include a Question-Persuade-Refer open house for those interested in teaching others how to identify the signs of suicide as well as an Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training that focuses on ways to start conversations with those thinking of suicide.

Dana Murguia, senior program manager for the Healthy Communities Division of DHHS's Public Health Branch, said suicide is a community health issue and should be talked about openly. "Talk about the topic of suicide like you would any other health condition," she said. "Discussing any other health problem isn't shameful. Suicide should be treated with the same consideration."

Know the Signs, a statewide suicide prevention campaign, offers tools and resources to start the conversation. Most people who are considering suicide signal their intentions in some way. Warning signs can include sudden mood changes, withdrawal or giving away possessions. An increase or decrease in sleep, appetite or drug and alcohol use may also indicate someone is thinking about suicide.

“We recognize that not everyone thinking about suicide shows obvious signs,” Murguia said. “For that reason, it is important to be proactive about initiating these conversations. Even though it might be uncomfortable, it is important to discuss it with your loved ones and colleagues in a direct way by asking, ‘Are you considering suicide?’ Asking the question provides an opportunity to have a real conversation.”

Check in with people around you, and let them know help is available. Become familiar with resources to offer to the person you are concerned about.

To sign up for a training, go to [Eventbrite.com](https://www.eventbrite.com) and search for “Humboldt County.” For a list of resources including the Know the Signs campaign, visit humboldt.gov/2096/Suicide-Prevention-Resources.

If you are concerned for yourself or someone else, contact the 24-hour Mental Health Crisis Line at 707-445-7715 or the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 800-273-8255.



On Tuesday, Aug. 28, members of the Humboldt County Suicide Prevention Network gave a presentation to the Board of Supervisors about local efforts to prevent suicide through education, intervention and stigma reduction. From left to right, back row: Lara Weiss, Nicole Chappelle, Dana Murguia, Ron Largusa, Eric Ruiz and Travis Vale. Middle row: Michael Weiss, Karen Baker, Megan Montgomery, Anna Owings-Heidrick, Ronny Davis and Rob England. Front Row: Heather Freitas, Kris Huschle, Kristen Smith, Wendy Rinkel and Alissa Leigh.

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