



## **Lawrence Township Recognizes**

### **Suicide Prevention Awareness Month 2022**

September is Suicide Prevention Awareness Month – a time to acknowledge those affected by suicide, share resources, and learn more about this highly prevalent but often taboo topic. September was officially declared Suicide Prevention Awareness month in 2008, a year in which the rate of suicides in the United States increased by about 15,000. Overall, between 2000 and 2018, suicide mortality rates rose by 35% in the United States. They have dropped since then, but only slightly.

The topic of Suicide prevention awareness is especially relevant to young people. While suicide is the 10th leading cause of death overall in the United States, it is the second leading cause of death among people ages 10-24. Also, for each youth suicide, it is estimated that 100-200 others attempt suicide. About 12% of young adults and about 19% of high school students have suicidal thoughts. Suicide risk increases when these three factors—if not addressed—coincide to create a sense of hopelessness and despair: Current life stressors, Historical risk factors, and Lethal means of harm. Among teenagers, suicide attempts may be associated with

the pressures of the transition into adulthood, but they could also be associated with a family history of suicide attempts, exposure to violence, impulsivity, bullying, an acute loss or rejection, or a serious mental health condition.

It is important to be aware of the warning signs. Someone thinking about suicide might make openly suicidal statements and comments, but the signs could be less direct. Examples include changes in eating or sleeping habits, frequent or pervasive sadness, withdrawal from friends, family, and regular activities, constant fatigue or feeling unwell all the time, a decline in the quality of schoolwork, or preoccupation with death and dying. Young people who are thinking about suicide might also stop planning for the future, or may start giving away their possessions. If you recognize the warning signs in your friend or family member, be sure to show them that you care by checking in and asking them about their behavior. Also, make sure to seek the help of a trained and qualified mental health professional.

Mental health issues are very closely connected with suicide rates. Research shows that 90% of those that die by suicide were showing symptoms of a mental health condition and about half of those that die by suicide had a diagnosed mental health condition. While this does not, of course, mean that someone suffering from a mental health condition is automatically suicidal, it does show how important it is to be aware of your own mental health and know when to seek help. 1 in 3 young adults experienced a mental, behavioral, or emotional health issue in the past year, so you are definitely not alone.

With the core values of diversity, equity, and inclusion in mind, it is crucial that we recognize the disproportionate effects of suicide on oppressed minority groups. Lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth are 4x more likely to attempt suicide than straight youth. Transgender adults are nearly 12x more likely to attempt suicide than the general population. Also, American Indian and

Alaska Native (AIAN) people have the highest reported suicide rates of any racial/ethnic group in the U.S, and suicide is the leading cause of death for people held in local jails, far too many of which are there unjustly due to the mass incarceration of innocent people of color in this country.

With these figures in mind, make sure to be aware of the toll that systematic oppression takes on entire communities, and let this information function as empowerment in the fight for queer liberation, and dismantling systemic racism. Below you will find some helpful links about suicide prevention, seeking help, and learning more.

### ***Helpful Links:***

[Knowing the Warning Signs and Risk Factors of Suicide](#)

[Navigating a Mental Health Crisis](#)

[Types of Mental Health Professionals](#)

### ***Resources:***

- Suicide and Crisis Lifeline: [988](#)
- 24/7 Crisis Hotline: National Suicide Prevention Lifeline Network  
[www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org) // 1-800-273-TALK (8255) (Veterans, press 1)
- [Crisis Text Line](#): Text TALK to 741-741 to text with a trained crisis counselor from the Crisis Text Line for free, 24/7
- [Veterans Crisis Line](#): Send a text to 838255
- [The Trevor Project](#): 1-866-488-7386