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CRISIS SUPPORT SERVICES
of Alameda County

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CRISIS SUPPORT SERVICES
of Alameda County

Fall 2012 Newsletter

CSS Promotes World Suicide Prevention Week

Crisis Support Services joins the American Association of Suicidology, International Association for Suicide Prevention (IASP), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the World Federation for Mental Health, is promoting World Suicide Prevention Week September 9-15, 2012. This year's theme is "Collaborations in Suicidology: Bridging the Disciplines," and will focus on raising awareness that suicide is a major preventable cause of premature death on a global level.

Suicide as an International Problem

Suicide is an international problem and a major public health concern. Suicide claims approximately 1 million lives worldwide each year, resulting in one suicide every 40 seconds. There is an estimated 10-20 suicide attempts per each completed suicide, resulting in several million suicide attempts each year.

Suicide and suicidal behavior affects individuals of all ages, genders, races and religions across the planet. Risk factors remain essentially the same from country to country. Mental illness, substance abuse, previous suicide attempts, hopelessness, access to lethal means, recent loss of loved ones, unemployment and vulnerability to self-harm are just few examples of risk factors.

Protective factors are also the same in all corners of the world. High self-esteem, social connectedness, problem-solving skills, supportive family and friends are all examples of factors that buffer against suicide and suicidal behaviors.

The Partners

The *International Association for Suicide Prevention (IASP)* was founded in Vienna, Austria in 1960 as a working fellowship of researchers, clinicians, practitioners, volunteers and organizations of many kinds. IASP wishes to contribute to suicide prevention through the resources of its members and in collaboration with other major organizations in the field of prevention. The *American Association of Suicidology*, of which CSS is proud to be a member, is a key partner and supporter of IASP (www.med.uio.no/iasp).

The *World Health Organization (WHO)* is a United Nations health agency founded in April 1948. Its primary objective is to help all people attain highest possible level of health (physical, mental and social well-being). This organization carries out this objective through advocacy, education, research medical and technological development as well as the implementation of health standards and norms (www.who.int/en/).

The *World Federation for Mental Health's* mission is to promote the highest possible level of mental health in all aspects (biological, medical, educational and social) for all people and nations. Their goals are to heighten public awareness, promote mental health, prevent mental disorders and improve care for those with mental disorders (www.wfwm.org).

The Plan

World Suicide Prevention week represents a call for action and involvement by all governments, agencies and organizations worldwide to contribute to the cause of suicide awareness and prevention through activities, events, conferences and campaigns in their communities. Locally, Crisis Support Services will be launching an aggressive public awareness and community education campaign with public service announcements, social media and articles to local media outlets. "Like" Crisis Support Services on Facebook and "Share" our



*Connecting people in need
WITH
people who care.*

SPGSOLAR

presents the

**9th Annual Robby Babcock
Memorial Golf Tournament**

Enjoy 18 holes of golf at one of the areas premiere private courses and take your shot at winning \$25,000 cash or a 2013 Mini Cooper. Join us for golf, dinner, awards, prizes, silent and live auction and a chance to take home a spectacular Pebble Beach Golf Getaway.

Proceeds benefit the teen suicide prevention programs of CSS!

Register online right now

<http://golfdigestplanner.com/21513-9thAnnualBabcockMemorial>

Not a golfer? Join us for the awards dinner and auctions at 6pm!

**Conference on Suicide Prevention for Seniors a Great Success!**

July's "Older Adults: Preventing Suicide and Building Resiliency" conference was a great success. The one day event was sponsored by Alameda County Behavioral Healthcare Services and the Mental Health Services Act. Keynote speaker, Dr Lanny Berman presented to 90 conference participants and 12 speakers. Dr Berman is the Executive Director of the American Association of Suicidology and current President of the International Association of Suicide Prevention. As a national expert, he provided an overview of risk factors, preventative interventions, and best practice guidelines on suicide assessment and treatment for older adults.

The conference also highlighted local organizations who provided workshops. *Bay Area Community Services* led a training on "Reaching out to LGBT Older Adults", and *PEERS (Peers Envisioning and Engaging in Recovery Services)* offered "Wellness Recovery Action Plans for Older Adults".

The day featured a panel discussion of older adults involved with various local mental health organizations. The panel offered a rich discussion filled with lived experiences and wonderful insights into what providers are currently doing well and where improvements might be needed. A Resource Fair offered local groups the opportunity to present materials and information on services they provide.

Many thanks to ACBHCS and funding from the Mental Health Services Act for making this event possible!



WELLNESS • RECOVERY • RESILIENCE

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From the Executive Director

By Nancy A. Salamy, MFT



Dear Friends,

Fall is here and school is back in. That means our Teens for Life and School-based Counseling staff are back in the schools too! Teen suicide prevention is an important part of the work we do at CSS, seeing over 10,000 students annually in over 40 local schools sharing life-saving skills. Our teen programs are generously supported in part by proceeds from our Annual Robby Babcock Memorial Golf Tournament; and this year is no different. I hope you'll join us for our 9th annual event at Oakhurst Country Club in Clayton on September 24th. The event is once again presented by our friends at SPG Solar, Inc and sponsored by many local and regional businesses. BMW of Concord is providing a new 2013 Mini Cooper and Thomas York Accounting is offering \$25,000 as hole-in-one prizes! You'll find more information here about registering to play, becoming a sponsor or simply joining us for dinner.

September also brings National Suicide Prevention Week from September 9th-15th. CSS has been providing suicide prevention and crisis intervention services to our community since 1966. We are pleased to be the local crisis center answering the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, and are proud members of the American Association of Suicidology; both are partners in Suicide Prevention Week. Please help us raise awareness to the warning signs of depression and suicide, and where to go for help, by joining our CSS Facebook page and "sharing" our website and links with your family and friends. Let's make sure that our message of hope goes "viral" in September!

Again, many thanks to our donors, golfers and sponsors. Your support makes it all possible!

Sincerely,

Nancy Salamy

Psychological Autopsy

Cris Rita, MA

We are pleased to announce a new service that is now offered by Crisis Support Services. Psychological Autopsy, developed in 1960 by Dr. Edwin Shneidman, Robert Littman, MD and Norman Farborrow, PhD has become a best practice post-mortem procedure to help reconstruct the immediate and distal causes of an individual's death by suicide. It is a tool that may help families and friends better understand the death of their loved one by suicide.

The process usually involves interviews with family members, friends, doctors, or other people that are deemed close to the decedent as identified by the next of kin. The interviews are then transcribed and reviewed according to the protocol that is in place by The American Association of Suicidology.

It can also be used in case controlled research studies to better understand the risk factors for suicide. It helps to answer questions of causation in both individual cases of suicide and interconnections between cases (such as in clusters of suicide).

Crisis Support Services' Clinical Director Chrissy Brewer, LMFT and Community Education Coordinator Cristina Rita, MA are trained to provide this service.

If you or anyone you may know is interested in finding out more about these services please contact Chrissy Brewer at 510-420-2471 email: cbrewer@crisisupport.org or Cristina Rita at 510-420-3203 email: crita@crisisupport.org.

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Depression isn't part of growing older

Donna Cohen, PhD



Depression has many forms, from brief feelings of sadness to a serious medical condition. Most people feel sad and worried at some time in their life. These feelings are normal reactions to disappointments, illness or death. It is also normal to be moody, lose interest in people or favorite activities, have sleep problems and feel tired. There are all common expressions of what is known as normal reactive depression. The circumstances that cause reactive depression may or may not go away, but you find ways to deal with your problems. In other words, you bounce back and feel better in a short time.

But when sadness persists and habits, such as eating, sleeping, working and enjoying life, continue to be difficult, you are dealing with something more serious than just "feeling down." You are facing a clinical depression, an illness that requires treatment. Many people believe that depression is normal in older adults. It is not. Most people also believe that depression in adults with chronic illness is normal. It is not. Clinical depression is a medical disorder, and it is caused by both biological and psychosocial factors.

Fortunately, most depressive disorders are treatable with psychotherapy, drugs and other interventions. But if undetected and untreated, clinical depression can destroy quality of life and exacerbate health problems. It can lead to personal suffering, withdrawal from others, family disruption and even suicide. Because it brings the potential for suicide, depression is a life-threatening illness.

Signs of Depression

Clinical depression affects the body and the mind, causing changes in thinking, mood, behavior and body functions. If you recognize the following changes in yourself or someone you know, seek help from a physician or mental health professional.

Thinking: Depressed individuals often feel inadequate or overwhelmed. Even easy tasks seem impossible. Concentration is difficult and decision-making is burdensome. The world appears bleak, and pessimism colors perceptions of self-worth. Even successes are interpreted as failures. Thoughts of suicide may occur when the depression is severe.

Mood: Depressed individuals feel empty, helpless, hopeless and worthless, and they may report feeling pain and despair. Individuals may cry a great deal, often for little or no reason. Many, especially older men, become agitated and worry about everything. It is common to feel anger or even rage, as well as irritation, frustration and anxiety. Depressed moods are pervasive and persistent and do not lift even when good things happen.

Behavior: Depressed individuals often show such behaviors as restlessness, hand-wringing, pacing, the inability to meet deadlines, withdrawal from friends, staying in bed most of the day, and decreased interest in sex. Many drink alcohol excessively or take sedatives to try to make the depression go away.

Body functions: Depression affects the entire body. Individuals report physical pains as headaches, backaches, joint pain, stomach problems, chest pain and gastrointestinal distress.

Getting Help

It is not a sign of weakness to see a doctor when you are depressed. Unfortunately, the very nature of depression drains the desire and energy to talk with family members or seek professional help. Because depressed people often believe they are failures, many feel they are not worthy of help. The most courageous thing you can do is to get help.

To be clinically depressed is to have a medical illness. Treatment is needed. Depressive disorders are diseases of the brain, just as cardiovascular diseases are diseases of the heart and circulatory system. Depressive disorders are not the result of character flaws, bad parenting, divine punishment, or personal weakness. They are not anything to be ashamed of.

Learning to spot the signs of depression is like learning to spot signs of cancer. It can save your life. Learning to detect the signs of depression and then getting help are essential steps to good health.

Donna Cohen, Ph.D., is a professor in the Department of Aging and Mental Health at the University of South Florida and also head of the National Violence and Injury Prevention Project.

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Did you know that, each year in the United States, more people die by suicide (50% more!) than by homicide?

Or that 50% of those who die by suicide use a firearm, kept in the home for safety, to kill themselves? Experts believe that most suicidal individuals do not want to die. They just want to end the pain they are experiencing. When suicidal intent or risk is detected early, lives can be saved.

Learn the warning signs for depression and suicide by visiting our website at www.crisisupport.org

Together we can reduce the number of lives shaken by a needless and tragic death. Need to talk?

1 800 309-2131

Teens and the Risk of Suicide

Statistics for teen suicide in the US are slow in coming. The most recent data, from 2009, reports death from suicide for youth aged 10-24 as follows:

- 4,630 youth died by suicide
 - Suicide is the 3rd leading cause of death for 10-24 year olds
 - Boys are 4x more likely to die by suicide than girls, however girls attempt suicide twice as often. High school-aged Hispanic girls reported more attempts of suicide than any other ethnic or racial group
 - Over that 12 months: 6.3% of high school youth attempted suicide; 1.9% resulted in serious injury; 11% reported making a suicide plan; and 14% reported seriously considering attempting suicide
- Greatest risk factors for youth include:
- Mental illness, depression and substance abuse
 - Previous self-harm behaviors (such as cutting)
 - Low self-esteem, recent serious break-up
 - Exposure to a friend's or family member's suicidal behavior or death from suicide
 - Firearms in the household

CSS' Teens for Life, Text Counseling and School-based Counseling Programs offer support for youth in crisis. For more information contact Mercedes Coleman, Education Director at 510 420-2473, or Clinical Director Chrissy Brewer at 510 420-2471.

Suicide and Seniors

Depression is a serious mental health challenge for our aging population. It goes undiagnosed in 80% of the older population (65 and older) with symptoms often being attributed to aging, illness, or isolation. The lack of detection, diagnosis, and treatment of depression in older Americans, is unacceptable, since depressive disorders are treatable. Depression, coupled with other risk factors, can be lethal. Older persons in the US and around the world have the highest suicide rates of any other age group, and the rates increase with age.

Older adults show a greater degree of planning and are intent than younger persons. Vulnerability, the decreased capacity to recover, and social isolation contribute to increased lethality in the aged. Older persons are less likely to be discovered after a suicide attempt, and they are less communicative about thoughts of suicidal than younger persons. Family members, friends, and neighbors need to be vigilant about risk factors for suicide. They may include advancing age, chronic health problems, use of many medications, changes in health status, being unmarried, multiple losses, and the sense of being a burden on loved ones. CSS offers assessment and in-home counseling services for isolated seniors. Contact Senior Counseling Program Director Devah DeFusco, MFT at 510 420-2475 to learn more about this program.

Did you know that, in the United States, one person completes suicide every 14 minutes?

It's estimated the more than 5 million people in the US have been directly affected by a suicide? Experts also know that suicidal crises tend to be brief. When suicidal behaviors are detected early, lives can be saved. CSS offers immediate crisis intervention and suicide intervention, and can help identify services available in our community for the assessment and treatment of suicidal behaviors and their underlying causes.

They also offer grief counseling services for those who have suffered the tragedy of a suicidal loss.



Don't miss it! Sign up now!
 Join us for the 9th Annual
Robby Babcock Memorial Golf Tournament
 Presented by SPG Solar, Inc
 to be held on Monday, Sept 24th
 Oakhurst Country Club in Clayton.
 Call 510 420-2472 or register online at:
<http://golfdigestplanner.com/21513-9thAnnualBabcockMemorial>