



THE SILENT EPIDEMIC

BY THE STATEWIDE OFFICE OF SUICIDE PREVENTION

There is an epidemic plaguing our society; a silent killer claiming the life of someone in the U.S. every 17 minutes. Each year in the state of Florida, more people die of this cause than by homicide or HIV. No matter your age, sex, race, ethnicity, occupation, orientation or lifestyle, this is an equal opportunity killer. No one is immune. You can protect yourself if you know the warning signs. What is it? Suicide.

Florida has taken significant steps toward preventing the devastating loss of life to suicide. In the spring of 2007, Governor Charlie Crist signed a law establishing the Statewide Office of Suicide Prevention as a unit within the Florida Office of Drug Control which is housed in the Executive Office of the Governor. This law also created the Suicide Prevention Coordinating Council which is the statewide body responsible for assisting the office in developing strategies to reduce suicide. The creation of the Statewide Office of Suicide Prevention and the Suicide Prevention Coordinating Council established a centralized structure necessary for integrating and coordinating the statewide effort, providing a unified direction, and formulating strategies that can be implemented at both the state and local levels. The role of the state office is to build collaboration and facilitate cooperation, develop strategy, create policy, seek funding and oversee the organization of statewide activities and the creation of various resources.



More people die of this cause than homicide or HIV

Suicide is a preventable public health problem and there are almost always warning signs and indicators when someone is considering suicide. According to the American Association of Suicidology, some warning signs include:

- Threatening to hurt or kill him/herself, or talking of wanting to hurt or kill him/herself
- Looking for ways to kill him/herself by seeing access to firearms, available pills, or other means
- Talking or writing about death, dying or suicide, when these actions are out of the ordinary

Additional Warning Signs:

- Increased substance (alcohol or drug) use
- No reason for living; no sense of purpose in life
- Anxiety, agitation, unable to sleep or sleeping all the time
- Withdrawing from friends, family, and society
- Rage, uncontrolled anger, seeking revenge
- Feeling trapped – like there's no way out
- Acting reckless or engaging in risky activities seemingly without thinking
- Dramatic mood changes
- Hopelessness

How do you learn the warning signs of suicide? Here's an easy to remember mnemonic: IS PATH WARM?

If you observe any of these signs, seek help as soon as possible by contacting a mental health professional or calling 1-800-273-TALK for a referral. For more information please visit, the Statewide Office of Suicide Prevention at http://drugcontrol.flgov.com/sp_prevention.html.

IS PATH WARM?

I	Ideation
S	Substance Abuse
P	Purposelessness
A	Anxiety
T	Trapped
H	Hopelessness
W	Withdrawal
A	Anger
R	Recklessness
M	Mood Change

These warning signs were compiled by a task force of expert clinical-researchers and "translated" for the general public.