

Allyson Adolphson: You can learn how to prevent suicide

ALLYSON ADOLPHSON • MY VIEW • MARCH 9, 2010

Print this page E-mail this article Share Type Size **A A A**

For years, it has been said that suicide is a permanent solution to a temporary problem, but this popular phrase isn't exactly accurate. Suicide is a complex issue and often the result of a combination of factors. Only in rare instances is suicide the result of one single, "temporary" incident.

ADVERTISEMENT

For instance, on Feb. 26, Marie Osmond's adopted son, Michael Blossil, 18, leaped from his eighth-floor Los Angeles apartment, ending his life after a long battle with major depression. Depression is a physical illness, like cancer or diabetes, caused by an interaction of genetic, biological, psychological and environmental factors. Research suggests that the number one cause of suicide is untreated depression.

On Feb. 25, actor Andrew Koenig, 41, best known for his recurring role on the 1980s sitcom "Growing Pains," was found dead in a wooded area of Stanley Park in Vancouver. Koenig also had struggled with depression and given away his belongings before traveling to Vancouver.

On Feb. 11, renowned fashion designer Alexander McQueen, 40, hanged himself after the death of his mother just nine days earlier. Perhaps most disturbing is the death of 13-year-old Hope Witsell, who died by suicide in her bedroom in November after being bullied at school over a "sexting" incident.

All of these deaths were preceded by complex life problems such as chronic mental illness, the loss of a loved one, or being socially ostracized — hardly what one could brush off as being a simple, temporary issue.

Although a significant number of suicides are not related to mental illness, it is widely accepted that 90 percent of suicide victims have one or more psychiatric disorders at the time of their death, and more than half of them have never seen a mental health professional. Those who die by suicide almost always leave warning signs, but others may be unaware of these or unsure what they can do to help. With increased awareness and education on risk factors and warning signs, suicide can be prevented.

The Governor's Statewide Office of Suicide Prevention is co-hosting a two-day mental health first aid training program in Tallahassee on March 25 and 26, a course designed to reduce the stigma surrounding mental health conditions by increasing an individual's skill in helping a person cope with a crisis. Like first aid or CPR, mental health first aid helps those experiencing mental health problems before they can get professional help

and support.

This program introduces participants to risk factors and warning signs of mental health conditions, builds understanding of their impact, and provides an overview of common treatments. This course is recommended for first responders, primary care physicians, nurses, educators, clergy, social workers, parents, and members of the public.

In Your Voice | READ REACTIONS TO THIS STORY

Hide Comments ▲

Newest first 6

LEARN MORE

- The registration deadline is Wednesday for the March 25-26 mental health first aid training course. The cost is \$119. For additional information and to register, go to www.creatingtoday.net/MHFA.html or call Marie Dudek at Creating Today Inc., 863-424-4810.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

- Allyson Adolphson, a suicide prevention specialist in the Statewide Office of Suicide Prevention, can be contacted at Allyson.Adolphson@MyFlorida.com.

Related Topics

- [People](#) - Marie Osmond
- [Health](#) - Depression
- [Life](#) - Country

Contextual linking provided by Topix

ADVERTISEMENT

More Opinion Headlines

Our Opinion: In the clutch 🗨️

Letters to the Editor 🗨️ (8)

You can't re-enact a Zing! 🗨️ (2)

Judi Evans: We can pay for mental-health care now or pay more later 🗨️

Latest Headlines

Tallahassee traffic: Roads are clear 🗨️

Tallahassee weather: Rainy, then warm 🗨️

Tappen trial: Medical examiner testifies 🗨️

Lawmakers look at savings possible by slashing state worker benefits 🗨️ (48)

Prescribed burns planned along US 319 today 🗨️ (7)

Most Recommended Articles

Lawmakers look at savings possible by slashing state worker benefits 🗨️ (5)

Red Hills Horse Trials riding high 🗨️ (4)

characters left

Submit

- Red Hills Horse Trials end on high note ✓ (3)
- Victims robbed after responding to fake Craigslist ads for computers ✓ (3)
- Port St. Joe basketball falls in state semifinals ✓ (3)

Most Commented Articles

- You can't legislate good Zing!s 🗨️ (92)
- Florida budget outlook grim 🗨️ (91)
- Letters to the Editor 🗨️ (60)
- Uncertainty takes toll on Hoffman's parents 🗨️ (183)
- Victims robbed after responding to fake Craigslist ads for computers 🗨️ (56)

ADVERTISEMENT



Partners: [Jobs: CareerBuilder.com](#) [Cars: Cars.com](#) [Apartments: Apartments.com](#) [Shopping: ShopLocal.com](#) [Homes: Homefinder.com](#) [Dating: eHarmony](#)

[Home](#) | [News](#) | [Sports](#) | [Capital](#) | [FSU](#) | [FAMU](#) | [Communities](#) | [Opinion](#) | [Entertainment](#) | [Weather](#) | [Obituaries](#) | [Classifieds](#) | [Customer Service](#) | [Site Map](#)

[Terms of Service](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [About Us](#) | [Work for Us](#) | [Subscribe](#)

Copyright ©2010

Use of this site signifies your agreement to the [Terms of Service](#) and [Privacy Policy](#) , updated March 2009.