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Suicide a Public Health Issue – You Can Help

Suicide is a significant public health issue. Every 13 minutes, someone in this country dies by suicide. And for every person who dies, there are 24 more who attempt suicide.

Over the past three years, 249 Bucks County residents have died by suicide according to reports from the Bucks County Coroner's Office. Each completed suicide has devastating effects and intimately affects at least 18 other people. This means that in the past three years, a minimum of 4,482 Bucks County citizens became loss survivors, meaning they suffered the loss of a loved one as a result of suicide.

Fortunately, suicide is preventable. Each and every day, Family Service receives calls from people in distress via their CONTACT Helpline (215-355-6000) and the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (1-800-273-TALK). Trained staff and volunteers answer these calls for help and ultimately save lives.

One Lifeline caller recently wrote: "I called your hotline and was connected to a volunteer. She saved my life. To say her kindness and empathy gave me hope is an understatement. My son who was in the house that day also wants to thank her. She saved his life, too, by helping me. Thank you all from the bottom of my heart."

Family Service needs help answering the nearly 1,000 calls for help they receive each month. You can make a difference in our community by becoming a volunteer listener.

Volunteers are everyday citizens who undergo classroom and on-the-job training until they're comfortable answering calls on their own. Not all calls are from suicidal individuals. Some callers are struggling with the effects of anxiety or depression and don't know where to turn for help. Others have limited social interactions and just want someone who is willing to listen. All callers are seeking relief from distress.

Become a volunteer and help save lives.

Volunteers give a minimum of 8 hours a month answering phones in call centers located in Bucks and Montgomery counties. Starting on September 1st, the call centers will have expanded hours and will be open from 8:00 AM to 10:00 PM, 7 days a week.

The next series of training classes will take place on Mondays from September 18th through October 30th from 9:30 AM to 2:00 PM at Family Service's Langhorne office. To register for training, contact Ellen Vinson, Director of Volunteer Services, at volunteer@fsabc.org or (215) 757-6916, ext. 202 or complete the online application at www.fsabc.org/volunteer. Please register by September 13th.

If you are having thoughts of suicide, please call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (1-800-273-TALK). You are not alone. Confidential help is available for free, 24 hours every day.

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Family Service Association of Bucks County is a nonprofit social service organization with locations throughout Bucks County, Pennsylvania. Family Service's mission is to listen, care and help. Every day. For more than 60 years, Family Service has been improving the lives of children and their families, doing whatever it takes to help them overcome obstacles and reach their full potential. Visit www.fsabc.org to donate, volunteer or learn more about how Family Service helped more than 27,000 children, teens and adults last year.

“Several years ago, in desperation, I called you as I was in fear for my brother’s life. You gave him hope, dignity, and a beautiful recovery...”

- Caller to the Lifeline

“Glad this line is here. It’s how I made it through the night – knowing someone was going to call and check on me the next day.” – Caller to the Lifeline

Follow-up is an incredibly important component of what we do at crisis centers.

I’m actually thinking of getting help and telling my parents about the bullying and self-harm. It also meant a lot to realize that [the counselor] actually cared. It’s hard to talk about those types of topics, but it felt good telling someone about it. Thank you.”

- Lifeline Caller

“She helped me through a moment that almost cost me my life. She gave me the strength to seek out treatment and to reach out to those who mean something to me. If it weren’t for her, I wouldn’t be here.”