

The Alliance Project

Suicide Prevention and Connecting with those of Concern

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Mississippi Department of Mental Health
Supporting a Better Tomorrow...One Person at a Time



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Goals for today:

What WILL we do?

- Learn how to
 - Identify distress
 - Be a good listener
 - Make connections & build an alliance with others
 - Help those who feel isolated
 - Encourage help seeking behaviors
 - Learn about referral resources

What WON'T we do?

- Learn how to
 - Be a counselor or psychologist
 - Provide counseling or treatment considerations for others



Why is this Important?

Nationwide

- Second leading cause of death (individuals age 10-34)
- 48,344 people died by suicide in 2018.

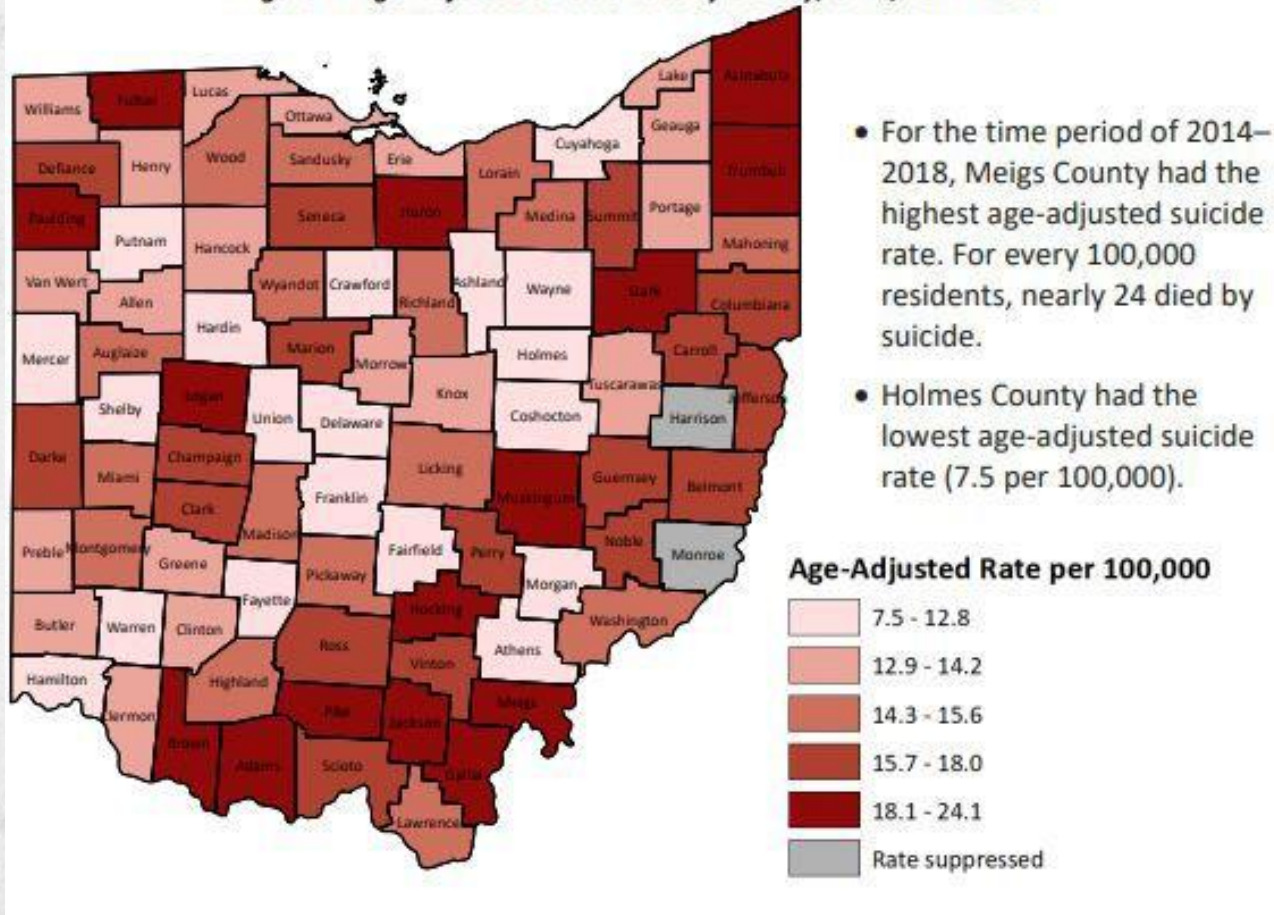
(NCHS, 2020)

Ohio

- 5 deaths by suicide per day.
- 1 youth suicide every 33 hours.
- In 2018 1,836 deaths by suicide.
- Suicide is the leading cause of death among Ohioans ages 10-14.



Figure 2. Age-Adjusted Suicide Rate by County, Ohio, 2014–2018




Fact or Fiction?

- Asking a person if they are having thoughts of suicide will lead the person to act on those thoughts.
- This is a suicide myth (fiction).



The Good, The Bad, & The Stressful

- A common bodily reaction to a demand (or anticipated demand)
- Good vs. Bad
- Stress  Distress
 - Sleep problems
 - Feelings of helplessness
 - Social withdrawal
 - Feelings of "not belonging" or feeling like a burden to others

Common Themes in Elevated Stress Response

Threat of Social Evaluation (e.g., public speaking)

Lack of Control over Outcomes (e.g., harassment)

Unpredictability

Perception of Things Getting Worse

No Frustration Outlets (e.g., hobby, exercise, etc.)

Low Social Support (e.g., rejection)



Stressful Life Events

"Happy" Stress	"Sad" Stress
Marriage	Death of a friend
Gaining a new family member (birth, adoption, etc.)	Divorce
Outstanding Personal Achievement	Personal Injury
Vacation	Trouble with a supervisor
Major Holiday	Being fired from a job



Risk Factors for Kids & Adolescents

Bullying (present & cyber)	Sexual Orientation/Gender expression
Lack of Connectedness	Relationship Concerns
Parental Unemployment	Assault
Poverty	Substance Use
Family hx of mental illness	Domestic Violence
Previous suicide attempts	Single parent home
Social & Family expectations	Abuse



Other Risk Factors during COVID-19

- Withdrawal from caregivers
- Social isolation
- Changes in energy levels and engagement.
- Restriction from extra-curricular activities.
- Overstimulation when returning to environments.
- No sense of normalcy (no structure, if present it is different)



Regression: We are all experiencing it

- Younger individuals who struggle to communicate accurately their feelings may struggle during this time.
- A potty-trained child might start having accidents.
- Adolescents may say “I can’t do it” with tasks once mastered.
- The younger the individual may regress more than other age groups.



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5 Steps to helping

Identify
Distress

Break Ice

Build
Rapport

Share
Information
& Make a
Plan

Follow up



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So how can I help?

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In what ways do you express that you are feeling overwhelmed?

What things would people notice if you were feeling this way ?



A Scenario: What may indicate distress?

One of the children in your home has recently told you about an event that happened before they came to your care. The child was very anxious about telling you the details of this event and presents very shy and withdrawn.

You have noticed over the last week that the child is no longer playing with their favorite toys, games, or engaging in conversation over meals.



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“Breaking the Ice”

It will feel uncomfortable if you have not observed concerning statements or behaviors with an individual before whether you know them or not and that is ok!

How to:

- Introduce yourself
- Ask them how they are doing
- Ask if you can help with anything
- Invite them to a community event, etc.
- Point out something observable in the environment
- Other ways?



A Scenario: How might you “break the ice”?

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Skills to Build Rapport

- **“Uncommonly Attentive”**
 - Go above and beyond
 - Remember details and be entirely present
 - Eye contact
- **Courteous Behavior**
 - Be kind, friendly, respectful, and helpful
 - Unexpected honesty & Authenticity
 - Show Empathy (demonstrate care and concern, and see things from the other person’s perspective)
- **Finding Common Ground and Similarities**
 - Finding common interests and similarities
 - Do you have friends in common?
- **Connecting**
 - Enjoyable, friendly conversation/small talk
 - Helping the person feel “not alone”
 - Helping the person feel supported



A Scenario: How would you build rapport ?

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But wait! What if I mess up?

Things that are helpful:

- Being direct
- Being open
- Acknowledging if you make a mistake
- Being nonjudgmental
- Showing interest & support

Things that are NOT so helpful:

- Having a debate about the value of life
- “You wouldn’t do anything stupid, would you?”
- Being sworn to secrecy. (Sometimes you need to reach out to get the person help)
- Acting shocked if someone mentions a desire to hurt self or previous suicide attempt



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What now?

- What are the needs your child would identify?
- What are the needs you would identify for your child?
- Support can come in many ways
- **Make a plan:**
 - Where to go? When to go?
 - Can you go together?
 - Who else can help?
 - Ask the individual what they think would be helpful for them in that moment.



Sharing Information:

Being aware of your local community resources for all types of presenting concerns for all ages.



Think about the resources in your personal communities

Consider your knowledgeable of the various resources within your own community.

If someone came to you and asked for help would you be able to offer it?

- Community health agencies
- Community mental health
- Private practice clinicians
- Local support groups for specific concerns
- Job help centers
- Other youth programs
- Psychiatric evaluations
- Inpatient hospitalization



Resources

- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline
 - 1.800.273.8255 **Text Line: 741741**
 - En Español 1.888.628.9454
- Disaster Distress Helpline
 - 1.800.985.5590
- Trans Lifeline (Individuals from the community)
 - 877.565.8860
- Trevor Project (Individuals from the community)
 - 1.866.488.7386
- Veterans Crisis Line
 - 1.800.273.8255 and press 1



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What are three ways you
might follow up with your
child?



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Thank you,



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Please contact Rachel-Clair Franklin for
any questions or follow up at
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