

Befrienders India

(National Association of Suicide Prevention Centres in India)

C/o SNEHA, 11 Park View Road, R.A.Puram, Chennai 600028

www.befriendersindia.net

Another life lost every 40 seconds. Suicide prevention – everyone’s business.

Suicide means nearly one million deaths in the world a year. Another life lost - which could have been saved - every 40 seconds.

Befrienders India supports its vision for a society where less people die by suicide. And its beliefs are that being confidentially listened to and accepted without prejudice can alleviate despair and suicidal feelings.

Befrienders India has 9 centers in India and has 50,000 contacts with people in emotional distress each year. It has 500 trained volunteers and runs a unique service every day of the year.

Befrienders India is also part of Befrienders Worldwide which has more than 1,200 member centres in 61 countries staffed by almost 100,000 volunteers. These volunteers work to give emotional help and reduce suicide.

Their work stretches from Zimbabwe to Japan, from Lithuania to Brazil, and the Befrienders Worldwide network shares information and also links with external contacts to share experience and demonstrate the role of volunteer suicide reduction centres.

Integral to this is the Befrienders Worldwide website – that lists helplines around the world and information on suicide in 14 languages. The site - www.befrienders.org - attracts 60,000 visitors a month.

In India according to National Crime Records Bureau 110,417 people committed suicide in the year 2002, which is 1.8% more than compared to 2001., a suicide is committed every five minutes. Seven times that number attempt to take their lives and as for those who feel desperate and unable to cope, the number is mind boggling. More suicides occur between 18 and 45 – in other words in the most productive age group of our society.

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Suicide estimates suggest fatalities worldwide could rise to 1.5 million by 2020. Suicide is a largely preventable public health problem, causing almost half of all violent deaths as well as economic costs in the billions of dollars, says the WHO.

Dr Catherine Le Galès-Camus, WHO Assistant-Director General, Non-communicable Diseases and Mental Health said: "World-wide, more people die from suicide than from all homicides and wars combined. There is an urgent need for co-ordinated and intensified global action to prevent this needless toll. For every suicide death there are scores of family and friends whose lives are devastated emotionally, socially and economically."

Among countries reporting suicide, the highest rates are found in Eastern Europe and the lowest are found mostly in Latin America, in Muslim countries and in a few of the Asian countries. There are estimated to be 10-20 times the number of deaths in failed suicide attempts, resulting in injury, emotional and mental trauma, although no reliable data is available on its full extent.

Suicide rates tend to increase with age, but there has recently been an alarming increase in suicidal behaviours amongst young people aged 15 to 25 years old, worldwide. With the exception of rural China, more men than women commit suicide, although in most places more women than men attempt suicide.

Volunteer centres find much in common, with people's issues including relationships, bereavement, money problems, depression and general health worries - whether they are farmers in a poor district in India where crops have failed, or students in Japan under pressure to succeed.

Volunteers around the nation provide emotional support to people in emotional crisis around the country. This group of people in emotional need is recognised by the WHO as increasing in size and needing improved responses.

To cater to the needs of the people who need emotional support Befrienders India wishes to open more centres where there is a need and to spread awareness about suicide prevention as a whole.

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Mission of Befrienders India

- Creating greater awareness about suicide prevention.
- Reaching out to people in areas where suicide rates are high.
- Increase awareness of the signs and symptoms of suicidal behavior and of where people can get help.
- Exploding the myths and misconceptions about suicide.
- To help establish more suicide prevention centres.

Notes to editors

Befrienders India is a registered society, founded in 1992, which offers emotional support to anyone in emotional distress through its centers in India. The centers are run entirely by volunteers and the services are totally free. Befrienders India's vision is for a society where fewer people die by suicide because people are able to share feelings of emotional distress openly without fear of being judged. It believes that offering people the opportunity to be listened to in confidence, and accepted without prejudice, can alleviate despair and suicidal feelings. It is the aim of Befrienders India to make emotional health a mainstream issue. The service is offered by 500 trained volunteers and is entirely dependent on voluntary support.

B E F R I E N D E R S I N D I A C E N T R E S

(Caring for the Depressed, Desperate and the Suicidal)

President	Sumaitri, New Delhi	011 23389090	Daily 2 pm – 10 pm
Farrokh Jijina	Lifeline, Kolkatta	033 24744704	Daily 10 am – 7 pm
Samaritans - Mumbai.	Samaritans, Mumbai	022 32473267	Weekdays 3pm – 9pm, Weekends 10am – 9pm
	Aasra, Navi Mumbai	022 27546669	Daily 3 pm – 9 pm
Secretary	Saath, Ahmedabad	079 26305544	Daily 1 pm – 7 pm
P.V. Sankaranarayanan	Sneha, Chennai	044 24640050	Daily 8 am – 10 pm
Sneha - Chennai.	Maitreyi, Pondicherry	0423 2339999	Daily 2 pm – 8 pm
	Roshni, Secunderabad	040 66202000	Daily 11 am – 9 pm
	Maithri – Kochi	0484 2540530	Daily 10 am – 8 pm

