

Befrienders India

(National Association of Suicide Prevention Centres in India)
11 Park View Road, R.A. Puram, Chennai – 600 028

Press Release

World Suicide Prevention Day - 10th September

2008 - Think Globally, Plan Nationally, Act Locally

World Suicide Prevention Day is held on September 10 each year as an initiative of the International Association for Suicide Prevention (IASP), and is co-sponsored by the World Health Organisation (WHO). The 2008 theme is "**Think Globally. Plan Nationally. Act Locally**" to develop global awareness of suicide as a major preventable cause of premature death,

Suicides - Extent of the Problem

The WHO estimates that one million people die in the world each year by suicide. These figures represent an annual world mortality rate from suicide of 14.5 per 100 000 population. The reality is that every minute there are two more deaths by suicide. and for every suicide; there are approximately 20 attempted suicides. There are also many others who may not be suicidal, but urgently need access to appropriate emotional support services.

SUICIDES IN INDIA

Incidence and Rate of Suicides during the Decade (1996-2006)

More than one lakh persons (1,18,112) in the country lost their lives by committing suicide during the year 2006. This indicates an increase of 3.7 per cent over the previous year's figure (1,13,914)

Incidence and Percentage Share of Suicides in States/UTs

West Bengal has reported the highest number of suicides (15,725) accounting for 13.3 per cent of total suicides followed by Maharashtra (15,494) accounting for 13.1 per cent. The other States which have reported higher number of suicides during the year were Andhra Pradesh (13,276), Tamil Nadu (12,381) and Karnataka (12,212) accounting for 11.2 per cent, 10.5 per cent and 10.3 percent respectively.

Rate of Suicides — Trends in States/UTs

Rate of suicides, i.e., the number of suicides per one lakh population, has been widely accepted as a standard yardstick. The All India rate of suicides was 10.5 during the year as compared to 10.3 during 2005. Pondicherry reported the highest rate of suicide (50.2) followed by Andaman & Nicobar Islands (33.6), Kerala (26.8), Sikkim (25) and Tripura (22.3). Pondicherry

Causes of Suicides

'Family Problems' and 'Illness', accounting for 26.1% and 22.5% respectively, were the major causes of suicides among the specified causes. The States/UTs which reported higher share of suicides due to 'Family problems' after West Bengal (39.1%) were Pondicherry (38%), Kerala (37.9%), Meghalaya (34.8%), Maharashtra (34.7%), Tamil Nadu (31.4%), Uttarakhand (28.2%), Himachal Pradesh (27.8%) and D&N Haveli (26.2)

Means Adopted for Committing Suicides

The means adopted for committing suicide varied from the easily available means such as consumption of poison, jumping into the well, etc. to more painful means such as self inflicted injuries, hanging, shooting, etc. Suicide by Consuming Poison (35.5%), Hanging (32.8%), Self Immolation (8.7%) and Drowning (7.3%) were the prominent means of committing suicides.

Suicides in Cities

The four Metropolitan Cities – Chennai (2,427), Bangalore (2,008), Delhi (1,296), and Mumbai (1,195), have reported higher number of Suicides. These four cities together have reported 50% of the total suicides reported from 35 mega cities. The suicide rate in cities (12.8) was higher as compared to All-India suicide rate (10.5). Chennai has reported the highest rate of suicides (37.8) followed by Bangalore City (35.3). Amritsar city and Kolkata had the lowest rate at 1.5 only among 35 cities.

Suicide is a complex problem for which there is no one cause. There is no single reason why a person commits suicide. Suicide results due to a complex interaction of biological, genetic, psychological, social, cultural and environmental factors. It is also difficult to explain why certain people take this decision while others in a similar or even worse situation do not. However, most suicides can be prevented.

Suicide is a form of communication which expresses that those persons who attempt to commit suicide feel lonely, depressed and that life is not worth living. Unfortunately, this communication is not listened to by many. Suicide is now a major public health issue in all countries. Suicide is considered as a cry for help and people who are feeling suicidal are always caught in a conflict between the wish to live and the urge to die. People who commit suicide take this extreme step only because they are confused and not able to take any other decision and they are forced to take this decision. Empowering volunteers in identifying, assessing, managing and offering emotional support to the suicidal person in the community is a very important step in Suicide Prevention.

Emotional support offered with warmth and understanding at the time of crisis might avert the thought of suicide. To provide this unconditional timely support through the use of volunteer befriending, Befrienders International was established in 1974. Initially started as The Samaritans Movement in the year 1953 to serve depressed and suicidal people through volunteer befriending in the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland, it was subsequently expanded across other countries through Befrienders International and there are currently over 350 centres affiliated to Befrienders International worldwide in around 45 countries with a work force consisting of around 40,000 volunteers providing care and support to the depressed and suicidal people. More suicides can be prevented if there is somebody to understand, respect and accept people as they are.

Recognising this need in India to help people from committing suicide Befrienders India (The National Association of Suicide Prevention centres in India) has helped people open suicide prevention centres across the country from the year 1992 till now and these centres offer emotional support to the suicidal by listening to their problems and also offer them total confidentiality.

The aim of Befrienders India is to spread awareness about suicide and the ways to prevent it. Befrienders India through its centres has been able to reach out to more than 50000 people in a year and offer emotional support to the depressed, desperate and the suicidal. These suicide prevention centres are run by trained volunteers and the volunteers are from different walks of life.

WORLD SUICIDE PREVENTION DAY ACTIVITIES:

On World Suicide Prevention Day a range of activities has been taken to highlight this year's theme. Initiatives which actively engage, educate and involve people, and encourage participation and personal contact, will play an important role in helping people learn and absorb new information.

Befrienders India supports World Suicide Prevention Day through 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

**(For Befrienders India,
P.V. Sankaranarayanan)**

Secretary
Mobile : 98404 99835

Notes to editors

Sources : www.iasp.info and www.ncrb.nic.in

THE CENTRES CAN BE CONTACTED FOR ACTIVITIES AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

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	02 pm – 10 pm
Farrokh Jijina	Lifeline, Kolkatta	033 24637437	Daily	10 am – 07 pm
Samaritans Helpline-Mumbai	Samaritans, Mumbai	022 32473267	Weekdays	03 pm – 09 pm
(Mob:98202 27015)			Weekends	10 am – 09 pm
	Aasra, Navi Mumbai	022 27546669	Daily	24 Hours
Secretary	Saath, Ahmedabad	079 26305544	Daily	01 pm – 07 pm
P.V. Sankaranarayanan	Sneha, Chennai	044 24640050	Daily	24 Hours
Sneha - Chennai.	Maitreyi, Pondicherry	0413 2339999	Daily	02 pm – 08 pm
(Mob : 98404 99835)	Roshni, Secunderabad	040 66202000	Daily	11 am – 09 pm
	Maithri – Kochi	0484 2540530	Daily	10 am – 08 pm