



# *September is Suicide Prevention Month*

## *Mental Health Matters*

*A Monthly Newsletter from Atlantic Behavioral Health*

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS | September 2024

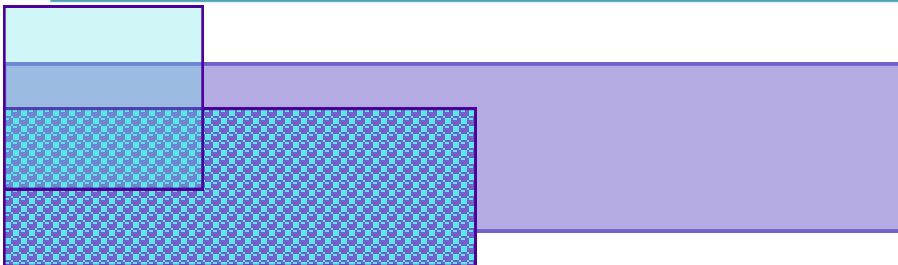
### **Suicide Awareness**

Suicide remains one of the leading causes of death worldwide, according to the World Health Organization's estimates. Furthermore, for each suicide, there are more than 20 suicide attempts. Suicides and suicide attempts have a ripple effect that impacts families and friends. Suicidal thoughts can affect anyone regardless of age, gender, or background. Loneliness, loss, anticipated loss, separation or divorce, declining health, or deteriorating finances can also lead a person to suicidal thoughts.

***Depression can make life seem hopeless.***

In fact, suicide is often the result of an untreated mental health condition and often indicates more serious issues.

[Shine a light on suicide prevention | Hub \(jhu.edu\)](#)



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## ***“My Child is in Crisis”***

### **How to Find Mental Health Care**

If your child is dealing with a mental health crisis, you're not alone. According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), one in five teens has experienced a debilitating mental illness in their life.

**Knowing where to find the right care can be confusing, frustrating, and even scary.**

“In the extreme, loneliness, depression, and anxiety can lead to a risk for suicide or self-harm, destruction of property, and even harming others,” says Paul Burns, LPC, coordinator, Atlantic Health System Western Region Crisis Intervention Services. “Keeping open communication with your child can make the difference in getting treatment sooner, and potentially diverting a crisis.”

#### **Have the Discussion**

Be ready to ask your child direct questions. “You seem to be down, worried, stressed lately. What is going on?” “Are you having thoughts that you don't want to be alive anymore?” “Do you ever think about harming yourself?”

Asking these questions does not give a child the idea for self-harm. The goal is to engage in honest conversation. Here are a few other tips to help you understand what your child is thinking.:

- Don't rush the conversation. A mental health crisis should never be taken lightly. Make sure that you have enough time to fully engage in thoughtful discussion.
- Listen and respond without judgement. Don't dismiss your child's feelings as typical teenage moodiness. You could miss key warning signs.
- Find out how long the thoughts, feelings, or behaviors have persisted. Anything that lasts more than a few days is worth exploring.
- Understand the severity of the symptoms. Are your child's behavior patterns being affected? Has their reaction to stress and frustration changed? Is it affecting their school and social life?

“Trust your instincts because most young people have trouble expressing their feelings,” says Burns. “Not all communication is verbal, so be mindful of your child's nonverbal cues, too.”

#### **There are four levels of care, depending on your child's needs:**

- Outpatient Care** – talk with your pediatrician, primary care provider, or therapist
- Intensive Outpatient Program** – daily therapy sessions
- Acute Partial Hospitalization Program** – full-day programming for several weeks
- Inpatient Hospitalization** – around-the-clock in-hospital support for safety or detox

#### **What to Expect from an Emergency Room Screening**

If you've decided to get an assessment by a crisis counselor, an emergency department nurse will take your child's vital signs, ask medical history, and inquire about suicidal thoughts. A doctor will then conduct an exam that may include a urine specimen and bloodwork. A crisis counselor will meet with you and your child to discuss a treatment plan.

The state of New Jersey has a 24/7 children's system of care offered through Perform Care. It serves children and adolescents with emotional, behavioral, and substance use challenges, and developmental and intellectual disabilities. It is a repository for many programs that treat mental health and substance use conditions. Mobile response is also accessible.

**Perform Care – 877-652-7624; available 24/7**

**National Suicide Prevention Lifeline – 988**

**For more information, call Community Health at 1-844-472-8499.**



## Supporting the Workforce When Suicide Risk is Present



### **How should managers and colleagues respond?**

As a manager and co-worker, you may be faced with a colleague who is contemplating or is at risk of suicide. How will you recognize the risk and what should you do? What are the signs of suicidal risk? Many of the warning signs of suicidal risk are similar to those for stress and anxiety, though sometimes they are more extreme.

Signs of suicidal risk may include changes in behavior, such as

- deteriorating job performance
- dramatic mood changes
- lack of attention to personal appearance
- withdrawal from colleagues
- giving away prized possessions
- interest in end-of-life matters, such as wills, insurance beneficiaries, or funeral plans.



### **An employee or colleague might also express suicidal thoughts by:**

- talking about not being present in the future
- making statements that indicate hopelessness (“Life is meaningless.” “I’m trapped.” “You would be better off without me.” “No one would miss me if...”)
- posting messages on social media about death or hopelessness

If you hear this kind of talk, whether expressed directly to you or through another colleague, question it kindly but firmly. You won't make the situation worse by clarifying it, and an open conversation with you may be the person's first step toward getting well.

[Shine a light on suicide prevention | Hub \(jhu.edu\)](#)



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You'll want to get your employee or colleague directed towards professional help, and the way you do this is very important. Demonstrating respect and concern can make them more willing to seek help and can contribute to the healing process.

**Let the employee or colleague know that you care about them as a person.**

- Give them your undivided attention, and remember that listening also includes body language, such as eye contact.
- When responding, reflect back what you are hearing to help them understand that you are taking their concerns seriously.
- Ask direct questions like, "Are you thinking about taking your own life?" Let them talk openly, show compassion, and speak in a nonjudgmental tone. Don't Leave the person alone, whether on the phone or in person.
- Don't debate whether suicide is right or wrong or whether the person's feelings are right or wrong. Don't minimize the person's problems or give advice; they need to hear that what they are experiencing is not their fault and that you are there to help.
- Don't pry into the employee's or colleague's personal problems but listen in a caring way if they choose to share them.
- Don't try to solve the problem. Your role is to listen and show that you understand that those problems are real and painful, and to help guide the employee or colleague to someone who can provide meaningful help.

**In an urgent situation, alert your manager and/or notify your HR department. With the person's consent, call the Employee Assistance Program, your community's crisis line, or suicide prevention helpline on their behalf. There is a dangerous myth that when someone is suicidal, there really isn't anything anyone can do to change their mind. Experts say that couldn't be further from the truth.**

[Shine a light on suicide prevention | Hub \(jhu.edu\)](#)



***If you feel one of your  
employees or colleagues  
might be exhibiting signs of suicidal risk,  
Take Action!***



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## **Join These Free Webinars:**

**Hope and Healing: Approaches to Suicide Prevention in Older Adults**  
**Tuesday, September 17, 3:00pm Zoom Virtual Webinar**  
**Visit [atlanticealth.org/events](http://atlanticealth.org/events) or call 1-800-247-9580 to register.**

This presentation addresses the critical issue of suicide among older adults, a demographic often overlooked in mental health discussions. We will explore the unique risk factors contributing to late-life suicide, including physical health challenges, social isolation, and psychological distress. Join us to gain valuable insights into identifying warning signs, providing compassionate support, and implementing proactive measures to safeguard the mental wellbeing of our aging population, promoting hope, dignity, and a better understanding of mental health needs.

Presented by Brittney Boykin, MD, board-certified geriatric psychiatrist at Morristown Medical Center. For more information, call Community Health at 1-844-472-8499.

**My Loved One Needs Mental Health Care...**  
**Where do I start? Where do I go for help?**  
**Thursday, September 19, 12:00pm, Zoom Virtual Webinar**  
**Visit [atlanticealth.org/events](http://atlanticealth.org/events) or call 1-800-247-9580 to register.**

Have you ever felt confused about where to go if you have questions about mental health, substance misuse or addiction concerns for yourself or a loved one? You are not alone! Learn from experts about:

**9-8-8: What happens when I call a hotline for help?**

Mary Claire Givelber, executive director, Caring Contact

**Psychiatric Emergency Services**

Karen Santangelo, LSW crisis coordinator, Morristown Medical Center

**Behavioral Health Access & Assessment Center**

Joseph Stricker, MD, psychiatrist &  
Vincent Maixner, LCSW coordinator

**Levels of Care & Community Resources**

Paul Burns, LPC coordinator, Psychiatric  
Emergency Screening Services, Newton Medical  
Center & Hackettstown Medical Center

**Understanding Suicide in South Asians: Learning from Sociocultural Insights,  
Survivor Voices, and Hindi Cinema**

**Saturday, September 28, 12:00pm–3:00pm Hybrid Presentation**

**In-Person: Overlook Medical Center, Bouras Auditorium**

**99 Beauvoir Avenue, Summit, NJ 07901**

***In-person space is limited. To register, please call 973-579-8573***

**Join Online via TEAMS: Meeting ID: 269 312 918 547 Passcode: Uq7YpU**

This seminar addresses the critical issue of suicide within the South Asian community, a topic often silenced due to stigma. Join us to learn about warning signs, prevention strategies, support mechanisms, and local resources. Hear from Shikha and Mehek Sadhar's family about their personal story of loss and explore sociocultural aspects through the portrayal of suicide in Hindi cinema.

Presented by Sunil Khushalani, MD, system medical director, Atlantic Behavioral Health;  
Vasudev Makhija, MD, DLFAPA, founder and president, South Asian Mental Health Initiative and Network, SAMHIN



## CRISIS RESOURCES

**If you feel you or someone you know may harm themselves or someone else:**

Suicide and Crisis Lifeline: **988**

The Trevor Lifeline for LGBTQIA+ Youth: **1-866-488-7386**

Veterans Crisis Line: **Dial 988 and Press 1**

**Dial 211:** 211 provides callers with information about and referrals to social services for every day needs and in times of crisis

National Domestic Violence Hotline at **1-800-799-SAFE**

National Sexual Assault Hotline at **1-800-656-HOPE**

Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN)  
24/7 Hotline **1-800-656-4673**

## ADDICTION RESOURCES

**SAMHSA's National Helpline** is a free, confidential, 24/7, 365-day-a-year treatment referral and information service (in English and [Spanish](#))

[Also visit the online treatment locator. Call: 1-800-662-HELP \(4357\)](#)

**Alcoholics Anonymous** - [Northern New Jersey AA - Meeting Finder \(nnjaa.org\)](#)

**Narcotics Anonymous** - [NA Meetings in NJ \(narcoticsanonymousnj.org\)](#)

**NJ Self Help Clearinghouse** 800-367-6274 - [FIND A GROUP | NJSHGCH \(njgroups.org\)](#)

## Atlantic Behavioral Health

**ACCESS Center:**

**888-247-1400**

Atlantic Behavioral Health Crisis Intervention

Services **24/7 Hotlines:**

**Chilton Medical Center: 973-831-5078**

**Hackettstown Medical Center 908-454 -5141**

**Morristown Medical Center: 973-540-0100**

**Overlook Medical Center: 908-522-3586**

**Newton Medical Center: 973-383-0973**

Email: [Nomorewhispers@atlantichealth.org](mailto:Nomorewhispers@atlantichealth.org)

Website: [Atlantichealth.org](http://Atlantichealth.org)



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