

# JOIN US!

Become an AMBASSADOR of **LIFE!**

- Our Facebook page contains articles, testimonials and videos about suicide prevention. You can share, like and increase awareness of this valuable information.
- You can also prepare yourself to recognize the signs and reach out to those in need.



[Facebook.com/ambassadorsoflife](https://www.facebook.com/ambassadorsoflife)

- Share your story, encourage others to do so

# AMBASSADORS OF **LIFE**



A suicide awareness & prevention campaign

**Everylife counts!**

# SUICIDE IS A GROWING CONCERN

## And one of the leading causes of death

- According to the World Health Organization (WHO) over **700,000** people die from suicide every year; **one in every 100** deaths
- Suicide is the **fourth leading cause** of death in 15-19-year-olds.
- Every year, **more people die** as a result of suicide than HIV, malaria or breast cancer – or war
- The causes are associated with **despair, shame** and loneliness. **Depression** is one of the leading causes of suicide.
- The person attempting suicide wants to **end the pain**, not life. Many survivors testified to immediately regret the attempt after the fact.
- Suicide is still a **taboo** in our society. The signals can be confused for weakness.
- One of the most important paradigm shifts is that it is **ok to ask for help**.
- **70%** of people who commit suicide tell someone about their plans or give some type of **warning signs**.

# BUT IT DOES NOT HAVE TO BE THAT WAY

## YOU can play a role in suicide prevention:

- Suicide is **preventable** and it is usually much easier than we think.
- Experts say that **93% of suicides can be prevented** if family and friends can recognize the **signals**.

### Here is HOW:

- **Engage** with anyone in your surroundings who has demonstrated change in behavior. A **simple conversation** can be very helpful.
- Pay attention to **changes in behavior** and emotional state.
- **Talk** about suicide concerns **openly** and as soon as possible.
- **LISTEN** with compassion. Being a **compassionate listener** is much more valuable than giving advice.
- Be **gentle** and **persistent**. Let your loved one know you are there for them.
- **Seek** and ask for **professional help** from a therapist or a psychiatrist.
- **Share** your personal experience, help others feel at ease as they go through their own challenges.

# SUICIDE IS A GROWING CONCERN

## And one of the leading causes of death

- Show **Respect**: Take the person seriously; don't challenge their motives
- show **EMPATHY**: listen with compassion
- Pay **ATTENTION** to the signs, changes in behavior
- Have the **COURAGE** to talk openly about suicide
- Offer support and **HELP**; also ask for professional help
- Show that you **CARE** "your well being is important to me"
- Take **INTEREST**, recognize the pain, "I see you are in pain"
- **FOCUS** on the NOW, don't make unrealistic promises
- **EXPRESS** love; share your own personal experience

# BUT IT DOES NOT HAVE TO BE THAT WAY

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- L** **LISTEN** with compassion "your well being is important to me"
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# HOW TO ENGAGE

## How YOU can help

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### **Why a campaign on suicide prevention?**

According to the World Health Organization (WHO) over 700,000 people die from suicide every year; one in every 100 deaths. Suicide is the fourth leading cause of death in 15-19-year-olds. Every year, more people die as a result of suicide than HIV, malaria or breast cancer – or war. This is alarming.

### **What is the purpose of the campaign?**

Suicide can be prevented. The good news is that experts believe that 90% of suicides can be prevented if family and friends can recognize the signals. It is estimated that for every suicide, there are about 20 attempts. Before taking place, people with such tendencies display warning signs. The problem is, people always recognize them after the fact. Our purpose is to draw people's attention so they can be prepared to understand the signs and act before it's too late. Friends, family and communities play an essential role in suicide prevention. Most people with suicidal behavior have ambivalent ideas about living or dying. As we increase our attention to our own responsibilities and possibilities, we can all save lives!

### **What are the main causes of suicide?**

There are numerous causes that can be a combination of several factors. We know there is a high correlation between suicide and mental health. It is usually associated with hopelessness and loneliness. It is important to understand that the person who attempts suicide is not trying to end his/her own life, but rather trying to end his/her pain. It is an act of despair.

### **Why call it "Ambassadors of Life"?**

The campaign started under the name Say yes to Life. It is a call for people to become ambassadors of life, to take an active role in suicide prevention by becoming more aware of it. In that sense we found ambassadors of life to be a more adequate name as it expresses exactly what we are trying to do. In

addition, the name say yes to life is commonly used by anti-abortion campaigns, so the change helped clarify.

### **How does the campaign work?**

The idea is to get people to like and share of our Facebook posts. Also to encourage the ambassadors to organize a their own posts on their pages, sharing stories and testimonials.

By involving a growing number of people, we aim to disseminate useful information on this very important subject and challenge the stigma often associated with it. As we spread information on suicide prevention, we will be able to reach more people and raise more awareness. An information may just reach the right person at the right time and help him/her take action and help someone showing signs of despair, depression and isolation. As we educate ourselves and others, we can save lives!

### **How can I become an ambassador of life?**

The first step is to join our Facebook page: [www.facebook.com/ambassadorsoflife](http://www.facebook.com/ambassadorsoflife). There you will find articles, videos and other material explaining different aspects related to suicide and how to recognize the signs people show before they act.

Ambassadors of life appreciate life and encourage others to do the same. We share useful information through our personal pages on social media and attract the attention of those around us. It is a call to pay attention to our surroundings and to recognize the signs of suicide in our relatives, friends and acquaintances so that we can help them when need be.

### **How can I help?**

Everyone can help by sharing the content of our Facebook page and also sharing his/her own content connecting to the campaign via a tag. Everyone knows someone who attempted or committed suicide. The more we know and share, specially the successful stories, the more we will be able to reach out.

Some examples:

- testimonies of people who have considered suicide, but who have decided otherwise or who are happy for having been unsuccessful in their attempts;
- videos/reports about the twists and turns that life takes, showing that there is always hope and that situations can change for the better;
- videos/reports on the consequences of suicide on family, friends, community, etc.

### **Can I talk openly about suicide?**

Yes. We should talk about suicide openly as it is still a taboo in our society. The signals can be confused for weakness. One of the most important paradigm shifts is that it is ok to ask for help. That is why friends and family play such an important role in suicide prevention. Talking about it can be much easier

than we think. Being a compassionate listener is a tremendous help. When we reach out to someone who is presenting the warning signs, we can help them go to a professional as well as see their problems through different lenses. This can be a decisive factor in saving a life.

**Are there any other events beyond Facebook?**

We have held events in Holland, Ireland and Brazil in places like a park or a square where volunteers engage with people on conversations about suicide prevention. It is amazing how everyone knows someone close who committed suicide or tried to commit suicide. One Christmas in Amsterdam, volunteers handed a white rose to everyone who came to talk about it. A photo was taken with the frame of the campaign for social media. Everything needs to be adapted to the reality where the event will take place.

**How can I organize an event in my city/country?**

Please contact the organization via Facebook to request material and information on how to activate the campaign in your country.

**Does the campaign include any kind of support for those who consider committing suicide?**

We are not professionals and therefore we are not allowed to provide direct support. Therefore, each ambassador must contact the local institutions in his/her country and refer those seeking help to associations that specialize in providing such assistance.

THE END