



Suicide Among Middle-Aged Men on the Rise

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Suicide among middle-aged men has risen 27% since 1999, according to the Centers for Disease Control. While the cause of this surge is still unknown, depression can increase the chances of suicide when left untreated.

About 75-80% of all suicides in the U.S. are men. Erin Bickle, Director of Counseling Services for WellSpring Resources, a local behavioral health center, explains men are likely to use more lethal means when attempting to commit suicide than women. They are also more likely to isolate themselves from their support systems. It can also be hard for family and friends to know when their male loved ones are experiencing depression because their symptoms present differently.

“Men usually experience the same symptoms as women—such as feeling worthless, feeling overly tired or losing interest in activities they previously enjoyed—but they express these symptoms differently,” Bickle said. “Instead of appearing sad or tearful, men are more likely appear irritable, hostile or angry when they experience depression.”

“Depression does not just go away if it is ignored—it only worsens,” said Karen Sopronyi-Tompkins, WellSpring Resources Chief Executive Officer. “The symptoms of depression can become so severe the disorder is debilitating.”

Sopronyi-Tompkins said that severe symptoms of depression can create a strain on family and peer relationships, and make completing work duties and other responsibilities nearly impossible.

“Despite the challenges that depression presents, there is hope,” Sopronyi-Tompkins said. “Depression can be effectively treated, but like most illnesses, it is easier to treat when it is addressed early on. Anyone experiencing symptoms of depression should seek help as soon as possible.”

If you believe that a loved one is contemplating suicide, seek help immediately. You can call WellSpring Resources' any time at (618) 462-2331 (Madison County) or (618) 639-2011 (Jersey County). You can also call National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255.

Founded in 1959, WellSpring Resources is a total mental wellness resource serving Madison, Greene, Jersey, and Calhoun counties. With offices in Alton and Jerseyville WellSpring's compassionate professionals work with children, adults and families to inspire hope and personal growth. Last year, over 6,000 people sought to change their lives for the better through WellSpring's mental health and substance abuse services. Visit www.wellspringresources.co for more information.

The services Mental Health Court Case Management, Senior Services, Outpatient, Adult Community Support and Child/Adolescent Community Support and provider WellSpring Resources is funded by the Madison County Mental Health Board.