

# **Zeeland Public Schools**

## **be nice. Newsletter**

**November 2020**



**Our Chix and Dux fly together to create a school  
climate and culture where our mission is to see all people,  
SAFE, VALUED, LOVED AND LEARNING FOR LIFE.**

## **Learn the be nice. action plan**

**be nice. is the STOP, DROP AND ROLL of mental health!**

**By investing 12 minutes of your time you can learn the be N-I-C-E action  
plan and how you can make a difference in how someone  
THINKS, ACTS and FEELS.**

**Click [HERE](#) to learn the be nice. action plan.**

# **Substance Use Disorder**

## **A Family Disease**

The hardest thing to do is to watch someone struggle. When it comes to substance use disorder no more powerful words have been spoken.

### **Three C's that can help you find your way**

- \* You did not CAUSE it.**
- \* You cannot CONTROL it.**
- \* You cannot CURE it.**

<https://herrentalks.com/note-to-self/>

<https://herrenproject.org/what-it-means-to-enable-a-person-with-addiction>

### **The Serenity Prayer**

God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference.

At the end of the day we are our stories. We have our story, our family has a story, our organizations and our community have stories. It is through knowing, honoring and telling our story that we find our way.

Our stories are full of wisdom, inspiration and hope.

How can you use your story for good and positive change in the world?

“That’s what story tellers do. We restore order with imagination.  
We instill hope, again and again.”

Walt Disney

# **An Open Letter to Our Community**

This is an open letter to challenge all of us to talk more openly about depression and suicide. In this letter we will address behaviors of concern, what to do and how to move toward a suicide safer community. Suicide prevention is everyone's business, it's what people do.

## **Some things we need to know and better understand**

- Suicide is currently the second leading cause of death for young people ages 15-19 according to the CDC.
- When it comes to depression and suicide we need to understand the worst thing we can do is nothing.
- Suicide is a preventable death and depression is one of the more commonly treated mental health issues.
- However, much like any untreated physical illness the longer one goes without treatment the more severe the illness can become and the more damage can be done.

## **A Common Myth**

One common myth suggests talking about suicide or asking someone if they are thinking about death by suicide will encourage attempts. In reality, we know talking openly about suicide increases communication, understanding and offers a greater opportunity to get help. And most importantly talking about it brings hope that can and does save lives.

## **Means Restriction**

Any firearm or gun shop owner knows the value of means restriction when it comes to the combination of firearms, depressed mood and substance use or abuse.

## **Indicators of depression:**

- **Feeling sad for more than two weeks**
- **Feeling lethargic, feeling like you have no energy**
- **Unable to concentrate**
- **Sleeping too much or sleeping too little**
- **Feeling worthless**
- **Feeling hopeless**
- **Feeling helpless**
- **Feeling negative or pessimistic**
- **Losing interest in activities that you previously enjoyed**
- **Crying frequently**
- **Withdrawing from others**
- **Neglecting personal appearance**
- **Feeling angry**
- **Feeling guilty**
- **Unable to think clearly**
- **Unable to make decisions**
- **Physical pain that does not have a diagnosis or explanation**

**It can be difficult to separate the psychological from the physical. Therefore, it is important to understand and recognize depression can sometimes take on physical symptoms. These physical symptoms only mask and make the real issues more challenging to see. Kevin Hines, survivor and mental health advocate shares his experience by saying mental illness is “brain pain”.**

## **Warning Signs**

- **Sadness or down mood**
- **Feeling hopeless**
- **Talk of suicide or death**
- **Researching suicide**

## **Rumors**

- **We need to respond to even the hint of a hint of a rumor.**
- **A person who may be thinking or talking about death by suicide may escalate to acting on that talk or those thoughts if there is not intervention.**
- **Ask the question, save a life.**

## **Verbal warnings**

- **“I wish I were never born”**
- **“I wish I were dead”**
- **“I won’t need this anymore”**
- **“My parents wouldn’t have to worry about me anymore”**
- **“Everyone would be better off if I were dead”**
- **“Nobody cares if I live or die”**

## **Behavioral warnings**

- **Change in appetite**
- **Giving away prized possessions or throwing things away**
- **Sudden change in mood**
- **Aggressive behavior**
- **Impulsive or risk taking behavior**
- **Deterioration of school performance**
- **Social isolation or withdraw**

## **Precipitating issues or events, but not limited to**

- Substance Use Disorder ~ abuse of alcohol or other drugs
- Divorce
- Unemployment
- Financial problems
- Isolation from family and friends
- Breakup with boyfriend or girlfriend
- Domestic violence
- School difficulties
- Depression

## **How to help**

- Be direct-ask the question “are you thinking about death by suicide?”, talk matter-of-factly about your concern.
- Be willing to listen
- Allow for expression of feelings
- Accept feelings
- Get involved, be available, show interest and support
- Offer hope that alternatives are available
- Take action-get help from persons or agencies that are trained in crisis intervention
- Contact the emergency room at your local hospital
- Call 911 to respond to any immediate threat of danger

## **No one has to go it alone**

- It will take a community effort to make Zeeland Public Schools and the greater community of Zeeland a suicide safe place to live, work and go to school.
- Death by suicide has no economic, ethnic, religious, cultural or peer group boundaries.

## Local Counseling Resources

Mosaic Counseling	616-842-9160
Encourage Counseling	616-396-6285
Winning At Home	616-772-1733
Holland Behavioral Health Services	616-355-3926
Pine Rest	1-800-678-5500
Forest View	1-800-949-8439
24 Hour Helpline	1-866-512-4357

**In an emergency call 911 or go to your local emergency room.**

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***Our Mental Health is just as important as our physical health.***

***Let's not just talk about it, let's be about it!***

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## Here is the game changer:

**N-NOTICE...signs of depression or other changes in someone's behavior.**

**I-INVITE...yourself to initiate a conversation.**

**C-CHALLENGE...the stigma; communicate important resources.**

**E-EMPOWER...yourself with the knowledge that you can have an effect on how someone thinks, acts and feels.**