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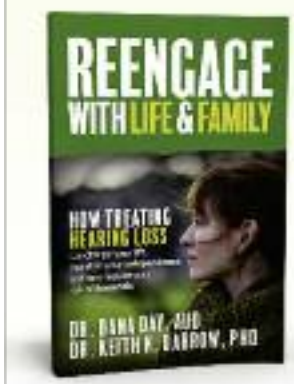

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September is Suicide Prevention Month

Not a day goes by that the topic of mental illness isn't making news. Whether connected to the passing of a well-known celebrity or the mental state of an alleged gunman at a mass shooting, the discussion surrounds mental health and the stigma associated with it.

September is National Suicide Prevention Awareness Month. It's a time to shed light on the topic and Phoenix has plenty of resources for those struggling with depression or trying to help a loved one. Suicide was the eighth leading cause of death in Arizona in 2017, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Nearly five times as many people died because of suicide in Arizona in 2017 than they did due to alcohol-related motor vehicle accidents.

According to the Suicide Prevention Resource Center (https://www.sprc.org/), some behaviors may indicate that a person is at immediate risk for suicide, including talking about wanting to die or kill oneself; looking for a way to kill oneself, such as searching online or obtaining a gun; or talking about feeling hopeless or having no reason to live

NATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION LIFELINE
1-800-273-TALK (8255)

Other behaviors also may indicate a serious risk, especially if the behavior is new, has increased, and/or seems related to a painful event, loss, or change. These include talking about feeling trapped, being in unbearable pain, or being a burden to others; increased use of alcohol or drugs; anxiousness or agitation; or sleeping too little or too much.

Many people are afraid to ask questions of those they believe might be suicidal because they are worried that it will increase the chance they will hurt themselves. But Dr. William Marsh, PsyD, Program Director Outpatient Services at Southwest Behavioral & Health Services, said asking questions about how people are feeling or what they are thinking shows people that someone cares about them.

There are many resources in Arizona for help, including Southwest Behavioral & Health Services (www.sbhservices.org), the Arizona Suicide Prevention Coalition (www.azspc.org), Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (www.azahcccs.gov/suicideprevention) and EMPACT – Suicide Prevention Center (http://lafrontera-empact.org/).

Crisis lines are available through Maricopa County at 602-222-9444, EMPACT at 480-784-1500 and the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255.

Health Briefs

New hope for ovarian cancer patients

One of the most difficult cancers to treat, ovarian cancer, is in the spotlight this month during Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month. For the 22,530