

WellPower Experts Highlight Seven Important Insights for Suicide Prevention and Support

Behavioral health experts offer guidance for recognizing warning signs, starting difficult conversations and connecting people with help

DENVER, CO, UNITED STATES, September 1, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Colorado's suicide crisis

“

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*Megan Bettenberg, MA, LPC,
WellPower*

remains urgent, with the state still ranking among the top 10 nationally for suicide rates. In 2024, 1,306 Coloradans died by suicide — about one person every six hours (CDC). In the Centennial State, suicide rates are highest among older adults, while most suicide deaths occur among working-age adults ages 25 to 64.

Misconceptions about suicide can make it hard to recognize when someone is struggling or know what to do when a loved one may be at risk. During Suicide Prevention Awareness Month this September, experts from [WellPower](#), Colorado's largest community mental health center, are sharing seven facts everyone should know about suicide:

1. Asking about suicide does not put the idea in someone's head.

One of the most persistent myths is that talking about suicide makes someone more likely to consider it. In fact, asking directly can open the door to an honest conversation.

“People worry that if they ask someone about suicide, they will put the thought in that person's head,” said Megan Bettenberg, MA, LPC, program manager of WellPower's Zero Suicide program. “But asking opens the door. It gives someone a chance to say what they are experiencing without shame.”

2. You can't always tell who is at risk.

Suicide can affect people with and without a diagnosed mental health condition. Relationship problems, financial stress, loss, chronic pain, substance use, trauma and other difficult life circumstances can contribute to suicidal thoughts.

3. Warning signs aren't always obvious.

Warning signs can include talking about suicide or death, expressing hopelessness or feeling

trapped, withdrawing from others, significant changes in behavior, increased substance use, giving away possessions or saying goodbye to people. A noticeable change from someone's typical behavior can be a reason to check in.

4. You don't need the perfect words—you need to let someone know they matter.

When someone opens up about suicidal thoughts, people often worry they'll say the wrong thing. Experts say acknowledging their courage and expressing genuine care can be powerful.

"If they're able to open up to you about what they're going through, it can also help to acknowledge that and thank them for trusting you: 'Thank you for telling me. That took courage. I would be really sad if you died. How can I help you?'" You are letting them know they matter. And, the direct language – 'I would be really sad if you died' – can be really powerful, even if it might seem uncomfortable to say it out loud. Sometimes that is exactly what makes it resonate," said Bettenberg.

5. Staying connected matters.

Suicide prevention doesn't end when a crisis passes. WellPower's Zero Suicide program uses "caring contacts," including calls, cards and other outreach, to maintain connection with people following higher-risk moments. Peer support can also help people feel less alone.

6. Don't wait for a crisis to make a plan.

Knowing where to turn before a crisis happens can make it easier to act. Learn about 988, Colorado's mental health line, identify people you can call for support and consider learning basic mental health and crisis-response skills through programs such as Mental Health First Aid.

7. The person who notices and cares needs support, too.

Helping someone through a crisis can be frightening and overwhelming. Suicide prevention does not mean one person becomes responsible for another person's recovery. "Support is not only for the person in crisis," Bettenberg said. "It is also for the person who notices and cares."

If you're concerned that someone you know might be at risk, WellPower's Marchell Taylor, a certified peer and family specialist, summarizes, "Ask directly. Listen without judgment. Take concerns seriously. Stay connected. Help connect the person with professional support. Don't keep suicidal thoughts a secret."

If you or someone you know is experiencing suicidal thoughts or a mental health crisis, call or text 988 for free, confidential support from a trained crisis counselor, available 24/7. If there is immediate danger or a medical emergency, call 911.

For more information about suicide prevention, warning signs, resources and training, visit wellpower.org/suicide-prevention.

About WellPower

WellPower is Colorado's largest community mental health center and is recognized locally and nationally as a model for innovative and effective behavioral health care. Serving more than 22,000 individuals each year across the lifespan, WellPower provides a range of services at more than 30 sites and nearly 200 locations throughout the community — including schools, hospitals, shelters and assisted living facilities.

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