



Florida Behavioral Health Association

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September is Suicide Prevention Month

Tallahassee, Fla. – September is Suicide Prevention Month, which brings the opportunity to spotlight resources and services available for all Floridians, especially those who are silently struggling, and for families dealing with the loss of a loved one.

According to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), suicide is a leading cause of death in the United States and was responsible for nearly 46,000 deaths in 2020.

Even more concerning is the impact of suicide on our children. Over the last five years, 652 [Florida adolescents](#) ages 10-19 died by suicide. While the rate of suicide for this age group fluctuated during this five-year period, it was higher in 2020 than it was five years earlier. During the same time period, 916 [young adults in Florida](#) ages 20-24 lost their lives to suicide.

Melanie Brown-Woofter, President and CEO of the Florida Behavioral Health Association (FBHA) said, “Suicide has left many families struggling to pick up the pieces while living with the immense pain of losing a loved one. Suicide is preventable, and by working together we can reduce these tragedies.”

Suicide Prevention Month places an emphasis on increasing awareness of mental health resources and spotlights [prevention](#) efforts. The FBHA has over 70 community mental health and substance use providers who work tirelessly to treat those who have been impacted by suicide and who lead local prevention efforts year-round.

“While Suicide Prevention Month gives us a platform to amplify our efforts, suicide prevention must occur every month and every day,” said Brown-Woofter. “In 2020, an estimated [12.2 million](#) adults seriously considered suicide in the United States, one reason why prevention is so important and impactful.”

There are countless resources available for people to learn how to help prevent suicide. One of them is [Mental Health First Aid](#), which takes the fear out of starting conversations about mental health by teaching skills to recognize a mental health crisis, and providing an action plan to safely address a potential crisis.

Brown-Woofter said, "Suicide prevention interventions can be as simple as a conversation or a text. We want Floridians to know it is important that we all check in with our loved ones to let them know we care and to make sure they are OK."

If you're thinking about suicide, are worried about a friend or loved one, or would like emotional support, the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is available 24/7 at 9-8-8. Most FBHA members have their own [toll-free helplines](#) as well.

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The Florida Behavioral Health Association is a non-profit organization that provides statewide leadership on behavioral health policy and practice. FBHA supports member agencies offering services to those in need of mental health and substance use disorder assistance and support. Its members include a broad range of provider types, ranging from small specialty organizations to comprehensive treatment organizations with multiple locations within a geographic region. For more information, please visit www.floridabha.org.