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[Counseling Center to hold suicide awareness walk](#)

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This summer, one of Preston Jutte's best friends died by suicide. Next Sunday, Jutte will join hundreds of others in an awareness walk that seeks to prevent others from suffering the same fate as Jutte's friend.

The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention's Out of the Darkness Community Walk, sponsored by The University of Alabama Counseling Center, will be held Sunday, Oct. 13. The walk will begin at the Ferguson Center and will circle around the Quad.

Jutte, a sophomore majoring in civil engineering, will be walking in memory of his friend and for others suffering from depression and mental health issues.

"This here is a concrete thing that we can research, develop and cure," Jutte said. "There are so many things you can do about it as people, whether or not you are affected by it."

Lisa Dunn, area director for the Alabama Chapter of AFSP, said dealing with the stigma surrounding mental health was important.

"What we want to teach everyone is that it is a physical illness. It can be treated. Only about 30 percent of people who actually suffer from depression will actually seek treatment," Dunn said. "For some reason, we just don't want to talk about anything above our shoulders that can get sick as well. We just want to encourage people to ask for help."

"I think it's something that we all should be educated on, because even if it's not relevant to you right now, you never know when you may come across someone who is suffering from [suicidal thoughts]," she said.

AFSP has a 24-hour crisis line (1-800-273-TALK) and serves educational and personal needs in a variety of ways. The UA Counseling Center also offers services specifically for students. Lee Keyes, the executive director of the Center, said the University is a "coherent community," with resources available for students dealing with these complex problems.

"First of all, it's important to know that we stand ready to assist any student who has concerns like this," Keyes said. After it is over, however, the center will continue offering its services to students through support groups, interventions, evaluations, referrals, outreach and consultations to concerned third parties.

The walk is AFSP's biggest fundraiser. Registration is free, but donations are accepted. The money goes toward AFSP activities such as funding research, developing different awareness curricula for high school and college students, political advocacy and support group formation. Registration for the event can be found at afsp.donordrive.com.