

# Kidd says suicide is a preventable death



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Published 3:00 am Wednesday, May 23, 2018

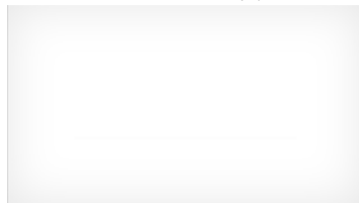
Suicide is not just a mental health issue, it's a public health issue and it is preventable.

That was the message that Teresa Kidd, East Central Mental Health community outreach coordinator, brought to the group of Brown Baggers at the Tupper Lightfoot Memorial Library in Brundidge.

Kidd said suicide rates continue to rise. In 2017, in Alabama alone there were 750 deaths by suicide.

"In Alabama, on average, one person dies every 12 hours by suicide," Kidd said. "Suicide is the third leading cause of death among ages 15-24 and that's the highest rate for any Alabama age group. Suicide is the fourth leading cause of death for ages 10 through 14. Young people are taking their lives. Those are the facts."

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Kidd said suicide is the fourth leading cause of death for ages 25-44 and the sixth leading cause for ages 45-54. Those statistics indicate that suicide is also prevalent among the young adult and middle age populations.

"Suicide should be a preventable cause of death," Kidd said. "Ninety percent of those who die by suicide have a mental illness and the underlying cause of most suicide is depression and is triggered by life experiences."

The trigger is usually not just one cause. It's most often a combination of things - divorce, separation, illness, death, sexual abuse, legal problems, disappointments, bullying and low self-esteem.

"More women attempt suicide than men," Kidd said. "However, men are more successful in their attempts because of firearms. Guns are more final than pills. But there are warning signs that we need to be aware of. Threats of suicide may be verbal signs as well as written threats or those posted on social media. Those threats should not be taken lightly."

"Talk of death and dying, of hopelessness, feelings of being trapped, taking excessive risks, anger, rage, withdrawal, dramatic changes and changes in mood. All of these are indicators that something is going on in a person's life that could point to suicide attempts."

If a person has a suicide plan, it's time to intervene, Kidd said.

"If they have thought out how they are going to carry out the plan and where, then their threats are serious and they need professional help," she said.

"Don't try to shame a person out of suicide by telling them they will go to hell. They think they are already in hell. They need reassurance and they need professional help."

Help is available through the local Crisis Line. During working hours, call 334-566-3391. At night and on weekends and holidays, the number to call is 1-800-467-1208.

Don't hesitate to call in times of personal crises or in support of a loved one or friend."

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