



Honoring Suicide Prevention Month

"When it is darkest, we can see the stars"
-Ralph Waldo Emerson

Be Hopeful

Suicide Prevention: Sharing Hope in the midst of the Darkness

BeWellPBC recently brought together lived and learned experts on the topic of suicide—a mental health concern on the rise during the pandemic [according to a recent CDC study](#). Some local champions shared their insights on how to recognize signs and where to go for help in this open and honest conversation:

- *Angela Cahill, Family Law Paralegal of [Ward Damon, Attorneys at Law](#) and a mother who lost her son to suicide. She has become an advocate and volunteer for the [American Foundation for Suicide Prevention](#).*
- *Abbe Giannoutsos, a Peer Specialist of [Mental Health America of Palm Beach County](#)*
- *Alita Faber, Support Director of [Mental Health America of Palm Beach County](#)*
- *Patrice Schroeder, Community Relations Specialist of [211](#)*

What are risk factors and warning signs?

Angela recalls back to when her son first died, and family and friends thought there were no warning signs that Erik would end his life. Now that she is an advocate for the [American Foundation for Suicide Prevention](#) (AFSP), she realized there were signs, and she wants to share them with others.

“There is a comprehensive [list of risk factors and warning signs](#) available from AFSP” she said. “Some may be obvious if a person is talking about killing themselves, but some people put on a brave face to hide from the stigma of having a mental health challenge. There is no one single cause for suicide. A health condition, bullying, relationship problems—in my son’s case, he became very irritable. He was normally a happy-go-lucky person. Before he died, he traveled all over the country seeing family and friends as

if he was saying goodbye.”

Alita noted, “one of the signs is withdrawal. If a family member is more social, maybe they’re not going out as much, keeping to themselves more, or staying in their room a lot. It’s important to ask them questions if you see a personality change.”

Suicide Warning Signs.

The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention advises something to look out for when concerned that a person may be suicidal is a change in behavior or the presence of entirely new behaviors.

This is of sharpest concern if the new or changed behavior is related to a painful event, loss, or change.

Most people who take their lives exhibit one or more warning signs, either through what they say or what they do.

Click this image for a full list of risks and warning signs.

BEWELLPBC SUPPORTS YOU!

Let's work to advance behavioral health and wellness for all!

Abbe has handled many calls from people considering suicide. “When they start isolating, saying goodbye, giving their stuff away, they feel there is no way out and taking their lives is the only thing they can do,” she said. “There are people who love them, but they feel that suicide is the only answer. It’s important to let them know there is help out there. People with mental health conditions can lead a full life.”

Patrice agrees and offers a suggestion for helping people who are suffering from mental health challenges. “It’s important that we teach our close family and friends—those in our inner circle how they can help us,” said Patrice. “Allowing those that care to anticipate what you need when you cannot fully verbalize if you are in your challenging dark days or moods. Each person is unique, for some it may be simple, maybe all they need is for their loved one to hand them a favorite poem or something that’s meaningful when they’re feeling down. Others may just want someone to be quietly present—without judgement or any other action—knowing that the person cares and is standing by...others may want more intervention to lift them from their low spot.” “If the situation is life or death—then an immediate & emergency response would be the priority.”

What to do if you think someone may be considering suicide?

“People going through this don’t have hope,” said Alita. “If you can provide them with hope, let them know that there are resources that can help them. Be willing to help them find those resources.”

Suicide Prevention Help Lines

211 Helpline:
Dial 2-1-1

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:

1-800-273-8255

Mental Health America of PBC Helpline:
(561) 801-4357

Local Support

Palm Beach County Youth Services:
561-242-5700

Mental Health 1st Aid:

www.alpertjfs.org/mhfa

The Compass Community Center:

www.compassglcc.com

WE ARE IN THIS TOGETHER

Abbe added, “With depression, you feel like you can’t get out of that dark hole. But people need to know that with medications and counseling, you can. I have severe depression, bipolar disorder, anxiety, trauma, and PTSD—it doesn’t stop me from doing anything.”

Patrice also advises, “We have to trust our gut instinct that something’s not quite right and ask the direct question: Are you thinking of killing yourself?”

Angela offers the following additional advice:

- Listen to their story; avoid debating problems
- Take them seriously and contact 211 or a national suicide prevention line
- Escort them to a local mental health service center or the ER

How can we protect our mental health with the pandemic and social unrest causing feelings of desperation?

Patrice suggested, “If you are uplifting yourself, you can uplift those around you.” Here are tips from our contributors:

- Watch comedy. Laughter and humor can be healing.
- Deep breathing is a wonderful tool.
- Take a walk. Nature can change the chemistry in your brain.
- Grow a vegetable patch.
- Journal, read or meditate. Focus on positive feelings of empowerment.
- Make a Pinterest board of happy thoughts, images or meaningful quotes.

- Unplug from the news. Instead, get involved in small ways by writing or calling your representative.

Be Understood

Below are a list of local resources available to support individuals experiencing suicidal thoughts and family members supporting loved ones.

Resources

Palm Beach County has many resources to help those who are considering suicide and families and friends who have lost someone. Angela has become a resource herself, aiding in her own recovery. “For me, getting involved with suicide prevention, fundraising and advocacy has been my grief healing journey. That’s one way I have crawled out of my own dark hole—to educate myself and others.”

Our contributors offered the following resources in addition to their own organizations:

- Family support groups: [NAMI Palm Beach County](#) (National Alliance on Mental Illness)
- Suicide loss groups: AFSP <https://afsp.org/ive-lost-someone>.
- [Jupiter Suicide Grief Support Group](#) that meets every 2nd Wednesday every month at 6:30pm.
- Mental health crisis situation: [South County Mobile Response Team](#), 561-637-2102, available 24/7 everywhere in Palm Beach County
- For LGBTQ teens: [The Faulk Center for Counseling's LGBTQ Teen Support Group](#)

Be Open

Connecting residents to additional support.



Whether we can be well.

MHPBC in partnership with Mental Health America of Palm Beach County (MHA) is inviting all group facilitators in our community to support residents to tell us more about you and your group.

More than ever, we understand that residents are looking for new ways to connect, have enriching conversations and get and give support.

We invite you to let us know how you and your group are connecting with residents. Please contact Abbe G. at agiannoutsos@mhapbc.org to learn more.

Be Supported

[Palm Health Foundation's Train The Brain](#) campaign begins **October 1st**. Below are a few of many free events that you and your loved ones can participate. Check-out more events [here](#).

TRAIN THE BRAIN

Sisters Serving Sisters:
Zooming In On Our Self-Image

October 9, 2020
7:00 pm - 8:00 pm

Have you found yourself apologizing for the way you look on camera during a video conference?

Many of us are struggling to maintain balance in 2020, and our self-care routines have fallen by the wayside. What toll has our self-image and confidence taken in this new, zoom world?

Let's Chat.

Join the Conversation!
Registration is FREE:
sisterservingsisters.eventbrite.com

Conversation facilitated by Rhodena Mesadieu,
Clinical Social Worker & Licensed Therapist

Presented by:

sayWHAT! ENTERPRISES
where health | wealth | heart

Palm Health FOUNDATION

Zooming in On Our Self-Image

[Sisters Serving Sister of Say What! Enterprises](#). Many of us are struggling to balance work while managing children, or to maintain a healthy routine in the midst of this pandemic. Naturally, some of our usual self-care practices have fallen by the wayside in 2020. This is understandable! But, what toll has our self-image and confidence taken in this new, zoom world? [Join the conversation!](#)

TRAIN THE BRAIN

Write to Heal
Workshop

October 26, 2020
6:00 pm - 8:00 pm

Write to Heal is a 2-hour, trauma-informed workshop that uses writing as an outlet for dealing with trauma. This workshop addresses the disproportionate mental health and psychiatric abuse experienced in the Black community.

Participants can expect:

- Meditations
- Writing Prompts
- Group Sharing

Register for FREE:
<https://bit.ly/3hACMw4>

Workshop facilitated by Flose LaPierre,
Writer and Sustainability Advocate

Presented by:

Healthier Delray Beach

Palm Health FOUNDATION

Write to Heal Workshop

[Hosted by Healthier Delray Beach](#). Write to Heal is a 2-hour, trauma-informed workshop that uses writing as an outlet for dealing with trauma. This workshop addresses the disproportionate mental health and psychiatric abuse experienced in the Black community. [Click here to participate.](#)

CALLING BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS
(Psychology, Mental Health, Social Work, & All Related Fields)

MIX & MINGLE

Come to this virtual event for behavioral health professionals serving Palm Beach County residents.

Thursday, October 22, 2020 at 9am

TO REGISTER AND STAY IN THE KNOW GO TO:
[HTTPS://PBCMIXANDMINGLES.EVENTBRITE.COM](https://pbcmixandmingles.eventbrite.com)

Register Now
to receive the zoom link



Behavioral Health Mix & Mingle

Hosted in partnership with [Healthier Delray Beach](#) and [Golden Parents Inc.](#) Our frontline heroes supporting residents' behavioral health are our behavioral health professionals. Not only are they being impacted by societal challenges, they are the ones helping residents cope. This event will provide a safe space for professionals to share and learn how to honor their mental health during this time. [Join us here.](#)

The Caregivers Club Presents

CAREGIVER 2 CAREGIVER

Caring For Yourself

**October 28, 2020
12:30pm
On Zoom**

The Caregivers Club is a safe space for Caregivers to come to care for one another. Come be empowered with Caregivers just like you.

REGISTER ON [Eventbrite](https://caregivers2caregiver.eventbrite.com)

<https://caregivers2caregiver.eventbrite.com>

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT RICKY@HTPBC.ORG

Caregivers Caring for Yourself

Hosted in partnership with [Healthier Boynton Beach](#). The Caregivers Club is a safe space for Caregivers to come to care for one another. During this time, many Caregivers are taking care of loved ones as they navigate the impacts of COVID-19 and social unrest. One of the individuals that do not receive the necessary care is them. Let's discuss ways that Caregivers can honor their self-care during these difficult times. [Register to join here.](#)

Be
Transformative

Be Connected

Know that [BeWellPBC](#) is here for you and our community. Please email us to let us know other

Are you passionate about behavioral health? Do you want to make a difference in our county and not sure how or where to start? Do you want to join the movement of advancing behavioral health and wellness in Palm Beach County? Contact our Project Coordinator, Freslaine St. Louis at fsaintlouis@bewellpbc.org to connect.

ways we can be helpful right now. Please follow us on [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#) for supportive messages and frequent updates.

Thank you to our Invested Partners.



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