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SEPTEMBER IS SUICIDE PREVENTION MONTH

September is National Suicide Prevention Awareness Month. The week of September 10-16, 2017 is National Suicide Prevention Week—a time to share resources in an effort to shed light on this topic. The Sioux County Sheriff's Office would like to remind everyone to reach out to those affected by suicide and raise awareness and prevention. It is also important that individuals, friends and families have access to the resources they need to discuss suicide prevention. There are many services available in Sioux County to reach out to for help. If you are unsure of where to begin you can always contact us.

Suicidal thoughts, much like mental health conditions, can affect anyone regardless of age, gender or background. In fact, suicide is often the result of an untreated mental health condition. Suicidal thoughts, although common, should not be considered normal and often indicate more serious issues. Suicide is the 10th leading cause of death in the U.S. and the 2nd most common cause of death for those ages 10-24; these rates seem to be increasing each year. People under the age of 24 and older than 65 are at an increased risk of suicide. Senior suicides account for 20 percent of all aged suicides. Elderly suicide is usually the result of many factors, physical illness, depression, and a recent loss. Depression is the most common cause for senior suicide.

Each year, more than 41,000 individuals die by suicide, leaving behind their friends and family members to navigate the tragedy of loss. In many cases, friends and families affected by a suicide (often called "suicide loss survivors") are left in the dark. Too often, feelings of shame and stigma prevent them from talking openly.

It is our hope that shining a light on this topic will diminish the stigma of those struggling with mental health issues. A support system is very important and means everything to those battling mental health issues. Suicidal thoughts can affect anyone regardless of age, gender, or background. Family members and healthcare professionals need to be aware of changes in behavior. Changes in behavior may be a sign of depression that may lead to suicide.

The Sioux County Sheriff's Office encourages and reminds everyone to be aware. We know suicide prevention is important to address year-round, but this month and special week provides a dedicated time to come together around a difficult topic. Having just one conversation with someone can change a life.

