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**ASPEN
Answers**

by Barry Erath, MSSW, LCSW

PREVENTING SUICIDE

There are a number of trends nationally that local statistics mimic. Completed suicides have been rising in recent years and Columbia County has also. Both Wisconsin and Columbia County have a higher rate than the national averages. Although confirmed numbers of completed suicides do not reflect the actual number, the county has had at least 10 known suicides in each of the last two years. Females attempt more frequently, while males complete attempts more often. Currently there is a push to get information out to schools, agencies, businesses, churches, and civic groups to assist with the magnitude of this issue, as well as teach early identification signs that may be instrumental in preventing a suicide. There are several myths about providing suicide information to the public. One is that it promotes suicide as a way to cope. The fact is that approaching the topic of suicide in a straight forward but not glorifying manner actually decreases the likelihood of an attempt.

Suicide is one of the highest health risks that is preventable. The educational program used both nationally and locally is QPR, the acronym for Question, Persuade, and Refer. It is a program that can be made available to your group and is provided by several area trainers. We have community outreach goals to reach several groups this year. If you are interested in a presentation, you may contact Deb Milman at Human Services, (608)742-9227.

If you or someone you know is presenting with suicidal thought, depression, anxiety or other mental health issues, our staff can provide help. Please call us at (608)742-5020. Our address is 2639 New Pinery Road, Suite 1. *Offering you and your family compassionate and professional advice.*

P.S. Prevention and early intervention for suicidal thinking not only saves lives but improves the quality of life.

ASPEN
Family Counseling
www.aspenfamilycounseling.com

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