



Creating HOPE through ACTION

WORLD SUICIDE PREVENTION DAY
Saturday, 10th of September, 2022

'*Creating hope through action*' the theme continues from 2021 to 2023 (WHO) and reflects the need for collective action to address this urgent public health issue.

Why Mental Health? During childhood, sound mental health is every bit as important as physical health for achieving developmental milestones. It helps children with their emotional wellbeing and social skills. In addition, mentally healthy children function well at home, in school, and in their communities and have greater chances of leading a happy and successful life. On the contrary, poor mental health during childhood can severely impact the way children learn, behave, or handle their emotions.

The worsening of mental health amongst children during COVID 19: Sadly the COVID-19 pandemic brought a complex array of challenges which had mental health repercussions for everyone, including children and adolescents. Grief, fear, uncertainty, social isolation, increased screen time, and parental fatigue have negatively affected the mental health of children. More than 330 million youngsters were stuck at home, till March 2021, for at least nine months, since the virus spread uncontrollably this time last year. It had become difficult for parents to calm their children's anxieties because of the uncertainty and stress in their own lives. The occupational or emotional challenges parents were facing interfered with their usual ability to address their children's needs and worries. When would the school reopen? When would they be able to go out and play? When would they visit their favourite places? These are some common questions that children were worrying about in the early part of the pandemic (Source: Unicef: 'The impact of COVID-19 on children's mental health, **October, 4th 2021**).

As the world steps into the 3rd calendar year of the COVID-19 pandemic, mental illness and the demand for psychological services are at all-time highs—especially among children. While some children benefited from changes like remote learning, others are facing a mental health crisis. Prior to COVID-19, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) data found 1 in 5 children had a mental disorder, but only about 20% of those children received care from a mental health provider. Whether kids are facing trauma because of child abuse or loss of a family member or everyday anxiety about the virus and unpredictable routines, they need even more support now—all amid a more significant shortage of children's mental health resources. (Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) 2022).

World Suicide Prevention Day is an awareness day observed on 10 September every year, in order to provide worldwide commitment and action to prevent suicides, with various activities around the world since 2003.

Statistics at a glance: An estimated 703,000 people a year take their life around the world. For every suicide, there are likely that 20 other people are making a suicide attempt and many more have serious thoughts of suicide. Millions of people suffer intense grief or are otherwise profoundly impacted by suicidal behaviors. Every suicide is a tragedy that affects families, communities and entire countries and has long-lasting effects on the people left behind. Suicide occurs throughout the lifespan and was the fourth leading cause of death among 15-29 year-olds globally in 2019.

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A quick recap of key facts

- More than 700 000 people die due to suicide every year.
- For every suicide there are many more people who attempt suicide.
- A prior suicide attempt is the single most important risk factor for suicide in the general population.
- Suicide is the fourth leading cause of death among 15-19 year-olds.
- 77% of global suicides occur in low- and middle-income countries.
- Ingestion of pesticide, hanging and firearms are among the most common methods of suicide globally.
- Suicide accounted for **1.3% of all deaths worldwide**, making it the 17th leading cause of death in 2019. World Health Statistics bring together available data on health-related Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) indicators, including suicide (indicator 3.4. 2) estimates from the WHO Global Health Estimates.

Each suicidal death is a public health concern with a profound impact on those around them. By raising awareness, reducing the stigma around suicide, and encouraging well-informed action, we can reduce instances of suicide around the world. In India, total suicide rate in India is 12.7 per thousand people and 14.1 for thousand male and 11.1 for thousand female (Source: WHO, 2022)

Suicide among children in India: According to the National Crime Records Bureau data, 11,396 children died by suicide in 2020, an 18 per cent rise from 9,613 such deaths in 2019 and 21 per cent rise from 9,413 in 2018. (Registry of National Crime Records Bureau data, 2020)

'Family Problems'(4,006), 'Love Affairs' (1,337) and 'Illness' (1,327) were the main causes of suicide among children (below 18 years of age). Ideological causes or hero worshipping, unemployment, bankruptcy, impotency or infertility and drug abuse were other reasons behind suicide by some children.

Let's ask ourselves the question again: Who is at risk? While the link between suicide and mental disorders (in particular, depression and alcohol use disorders) is well established in high-income countries, many suicides happen impulsively in moments of crisis with a breakdown in the ability to deal with life stresses, such as financial problems, relationship break-up or chronic pain and illness.

In addition, experiencing conflict, disaster, violence, abuse, or loss and a sense of isolation are strongly associated with suicidal behaviour. Suicide rates are also high amongst vulnerable groups who experience discrimination, such as refugees and migrants; indigenous peoples; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex (LGBTI) persons; and prisoners. By far the strongest risk factor for suicide is a previous suicide attempt.

So what can WE Do, YOU do on World Suicide Prevention Day? The 10th of September each year focuses attention on the issue, reduces stigma and raises awareness among organizations, government, and the public, giving a singular message that suicide can be prevented. 'Creating hope through action' is the triennial theme for the World Suicide Prevention Day from 2021 - 2023. **The goal of this day is to raise awareness about suicide prevention worldwide**

At ICPH (International Center for Child and Public Health): 'Promoting Health is an essential pre-requisite to build empowered communities' is the belief of ICPH. We are creating awareness on the 10th of September by **public education** on the worsening of mental health condition amongst children and organizing an interactive **knowledge update** for school teachers and students of government and government aided schools.

Our Resource Persons: Dr.Srinivasan, Senior Psychiatrist, KMCH & Dr.Karthikyani Murgan, Clinical Psychologist

COME JOIN US IN REFLECTION and ACTION

To anyone out there who's hurting — it's not a sign of weakness to ask for help. It's a sign of strength.

Barack Obama



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