



*Why You  
Need to Know  
About Suicide  
Prevention in  
York County  
2015*



**York County Suicide Prevention Coalition**

**Prevention Intervention  
Postvention/Survivor Support**





A healthy school is a place where students feel accepted, appreciated, acknowledged and cared for. A place where teachers, staff, and administration embrace Aevidum and “have each other’s back.” Not just one day but every day.

Call: (717) 227-0048 for more information on how you can start an Aevidum club in your school.

PA Act 71: Under the new law, beginning with the 2015-2016 school year, Pennsylvania schools must adopt age-appropriate youth suicide awareness and prevention policies and include four hours of training in youth suicide awareness and prevention every five years in professional development plans for educator’s serving grades 6-12. Schools may incorporate a youth suicide awareness and prevention curriculum into existing instructional programs. The Department of Education will be required to develop a model youth suicide awareness and prevention policy and a model youth suicide awareness prevention curriculum for use by schools and to make these and other guidance and resource materials publically available online. Programs available for College and Universities. Please call Cindy at (717) 227-0048.



**York County Suicide Prevention Coalition**

Dear York County Residents,

The York County Suicide Prevention Coalition would like to thank you for the opportunity to address the critical issue of death by suicide in York County, PA. Suicide is a major public health problem with devastating effects on our families, schools, and businesses. Much like cancer, HIV, and the flu, suicide has no bounds regarding race, religion, or ethnicity. Suicide is the second leading cause of death in York County, and of the 67 counties across the Commonwealth, York has the 6<sup>th</sup> highest rate of suicide. In 2009, 12 percent of deaths in Pennsylvania were by suicide compared to 17 percent in York County. From 2007-2014, 502 York County citizens died as a result of suicide. Action is needed.

The York County Suicide Prevention Coalition plan is intended to empower communities to provide suicide prevention, intervention, and response to suicide attempts and completions. Ultimately, our goal is to reduce the number of deaths by suicide throughout our county.

In 2007, Southern Community Services (SCS) recognized an alarming trend among older residents of southern York County. The number of suicides among older men and women was on the rise. It appeared the warning signs of suicide, especially among older adults, were not well known.

With the assistance of a DCED Grant, SCS created the York County Suicide Prevention Task Force that evolved into the York County Suicide Prevention Coalition. The role of the Coalition now encompass all age groups, provides Question, Persuade, and Refer (QPR) Gatekeeper training, facilitates survivor support groups, short term counseling, and online counseling.

With deep appreciation Southern Community Services wants to thank the York County Suicide Prevention Coalition members for creating a statement in the community and supporting the work of the Coalition.

Sincerely,  
Cindy Richard - Director of Southern Community Services  
Chair – York County Suicide Prevention Coalition

## Acknowledgement of Coalition Members

The suicide prevention work in York County would not have been possible without the dedicated efforts of the members of the Coalition. Individuals have attended meetings, served on committees, and volunteered countless hours to community projects to help reduce the number of suicides in York County.

**We would like to thank the following people:**

**Pat Bishard** – Retired Teacher, DASD  
**Lucy Cadwallader** – Community Advocate  
**Kathy Gaskin** – Adams County Task Force  
Co-Chair/Adams County Wellspan  
**Pam Gay** – Coroner  
**Trond Harman** – East Side Health Center  
**Stu Kozak** – Detective in Cumberland County  
**Teri Lerch** – Eastern York School District  
**Tamara Ramer** – Hanover Hospital  
**Joel Richie** – York/Adams County MH-MR  
**Gail Sagner** – Presbyterian Senior Living  
**Mark Schantzer** – Lancaster Coalition  
Co-Chair/D.E.S. Foundation  
**Erin Schmidt** – Penn-Mar Human Services  
**Shelly Thompson** – Dataforma  
**Joe Vulopas** – Aavidum and Cocalico  
School District

*Thank You*

**York County Suicide Prevention Coalition  
Southern Community Services  
44 South Main Street  
Shrewsbury, PA 17361  
(717) 227-0048  
crichard@penn-mar.org**



**Like us on our facebook page link:**

<https://www.facebook.com/yorkcountysuicidepreventioncoalition>

## Suicide Survivor Support Groups

**1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday of the Month**

**6:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.**

**Dover United Church of Christ**

**45 West Canal Street**

**Dover, PA 17315**

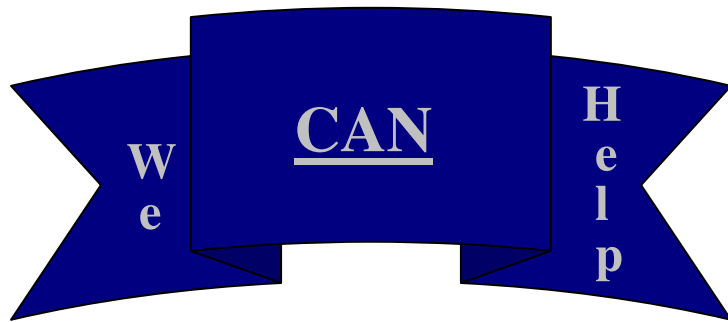
**3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of the Month**

**6:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.**

**Southern Community Services**

**44 South Main Street**

**Shrewsbury, PA 17361**



**WHERE TO GO FOR HELP**

- Wellspan Crisis Intervention Services  
(800) 673-2489 or (717) 851-5320
- Victim Assistance Center, a program of the  
YWCA of York, PA  
(717) 854-3131 or (800) 422-3204
- TrueNorth Wellness Services  
1-866-325-0339 or (717) 637-7633
- Southern Community Services  
(717) 227-0048
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline  
(800) 273-TALK (8255)
- Trevor Project Lifeline  
(866) 488-7386

To request services, request a speaker, join  
the York County Suicide Prevention  
Coalition, or for all non-emergency questions,  
please call: (717) 227-0048  
email: crichard@penn-mar.org or  
ycspc2012@gmail.com (online counseling only)

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# Vision Mission Goals

## Suicide Prevention Vision, Mission, and Goals

### **Mission**

The York County Suicide Prevention Coalition will provide education for and collaboration with the community to prevent suicide.

### **Vision**

To reduce the suicide rate, to eliminate the stigma, and to increase survivor (individuals touched by suicide) support.

### **Goals**

#### **Goal 1: Suicide Prevention**

To raise awareness of suicide through marketing, media, communication, and education.

#### **Goal 2: Adolescent and Transitional Age Suicide Prevention**

To provide opportunities for youth and young adults to recognize at risk behaviors and encourage peer to peer support and assistance.

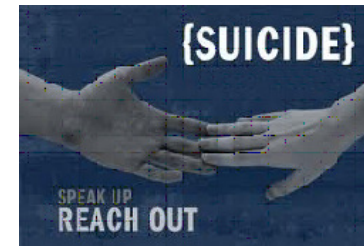
#### **Goal 3: Adult/Older Adult Suicide Prevention**

To educate adults/older adults, family, and community to promote and encourage optimal physical and mental wellness.

#### **Goal 4: Community**

To provide programs, education, and awareness to specific community populations, i.e. military, domestic violence, workplace, and faith based communities.

## ASK A QUESTION SAVE A LIFE!



### QPR for Suicide Prevention

- **Q**uestion the person about suicide.
- **P**ersuade the person to get help.
- **R**efer the person for help.

To know more about QPR or to request a  
QPR workshop call:  
Cindy at (717) 227-0048

For the Suicide Prevention and the Workplace  
Workshop call to schedule or request information.



Source: QPR Institute, Dr. Paul Quinnett, PhD

## Introduction

### FINDING THE COURAGE TO ACT

- Don't worry about being disloyal
- Don't worry about breaking a trust
- Don't worry about not having sufficient information to call for help

Remember, we are only responsible for what we know at the time we know it, not for things we will learn later on. So, if in doubt, act!

- **Reach Out!**
- **Don't wait!**
- **Do something!**



A community without suicide is an endeavor that many are determined to make a reality in York County. Suicide, often a preventable tragedy, is a major public health problem. Just like cancer, HIV, and the flu, it takes lives, harms families, and exerts an emotional and financial toll on our community.

**Suicide is the second leading cause of traumatic death in York County.** All though according to the 2010 Census York is the 9<sup>th</sup> largest county, we have the 6<sup>th</sup> highest rate of suicide of the 67 counties across the Commonwealth. In 2009, 12 percent of the deaths in Pennsylvania were by suicide, compared to 17 percent in York County. From 2007 to 2014, 502 York County citizens died as a result of suicide, including 87 people last year.

The high number of deaths by suicide is just part of this growing problem. Many people attempt suicide but do not die. It is difficult to gather accurate information about the number of people who attempt suicide, the number of people who have suicidal ideation, or the other means by which suicide occurs. It is estimated that for every completed suicide there are as many as 25 more people who attempt but do not die. (American Association of Suicidology, 2008)

Suicide survivors consist of family, friends, and others who are affected when someone they know completes suicide. It is estimated there are as many as 16 people significantly affected by each suicide (Jordan and McIntosh, 2011.) Because survivors often feel hopeless, some choose to take their own lives, leaving other friends and families very concerned, thus causing a domino effect. While many factors influence whether or not a person will become suicidal, the loss of a family member or friend by suicide puts survivors at a higher risk for suicide.

**The York County Suicide Prevention Coalition plan is intended to empower communities to provide suicide prevention, intervention, and response to suicide attempts and completions. Ultimately, our goal is to reduce the number of deaths by suicide throughout our county.**



5. **Be prepared for all possible reactions.** The person may deny that they have a problem. They may react with hopeless statements and want to be left alone. Realize that the depression is talking and don't give up. If you're not sure what to do call someone for help.

**Call the National Hotline at 800-273-8255.**

6. **Offer emotional support, understanding, patience, and encouragement.** You cannot make someone get help but you can make a significant difference by sharing your concern, providing support, and knowing where to get information.
7. **Take care of yourself.** Know your limits, don't over extend yourself.
8. **Don't take over the person's life.** Although you may be willing to do everything and anything to help, only offer support and patience.
9. **Be reassuring and non-judgmental.** Mental health concerns are often hard to explain, and they may have trouble putting their feelings into words. Try your best to understand.
10. **Never keep talk of suicide secret.** Take any talk of suicide or suicidal plans seriously and seek help immediately. Stay close and make sure the person is not left alone. Always err on the side of caution and call 911.



## Are you worried about someone?

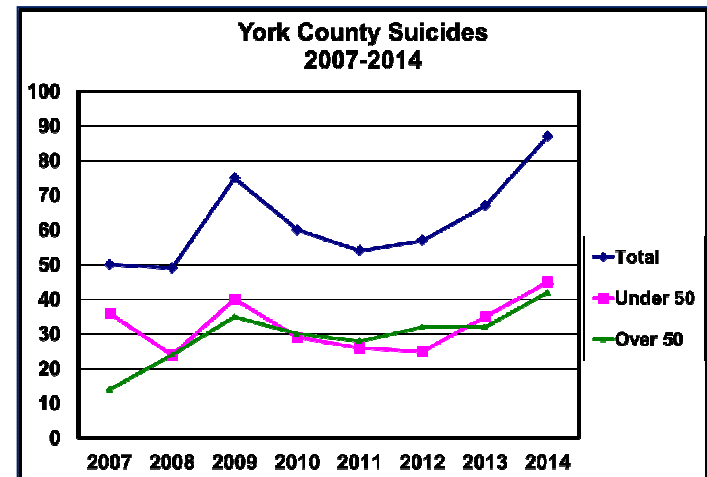
Here are 10 tips for helping someone with a mental health concern:

1. **Act now.** If you are worried about someone's behavior or attitude talk with him or her as soon as possible. Ask questions, listen, and be responsive.
2. Meet in a comfortable and private place when you have plenty of time to talk. **Tell them clearly what behaviors you observed that are worrying you!** Voice your concern in a supportive and careful way.
3. **Listen don't lecture.** Listen to thoughts and feelings in a sensitive way, non-threatening way. Communicate understanding by repeating back the essence of what this person tells you.
4. **Offer help.** Remind this person that mental health disorders are treatable and there is hope. Ask if they are getting the care they need. Encourage them to seek help. Do not give advice, but you can refer them to a health professional.



## Suicide and Our Community

- Suicide arises from the interaction of individual, family, social, and community factors. Suicide touches people of all ages and from all walks of life.
- Individuals, who seek help for mental health concerns, including suicide, are to be accepted and supported, not stigmatized.
- Suicide prevention is the responsibility of the entire community and requires a commitment from the local government, communities, and individuals of York.
- It is important for people to feel empowered to intervene with persons at risk of suicide.

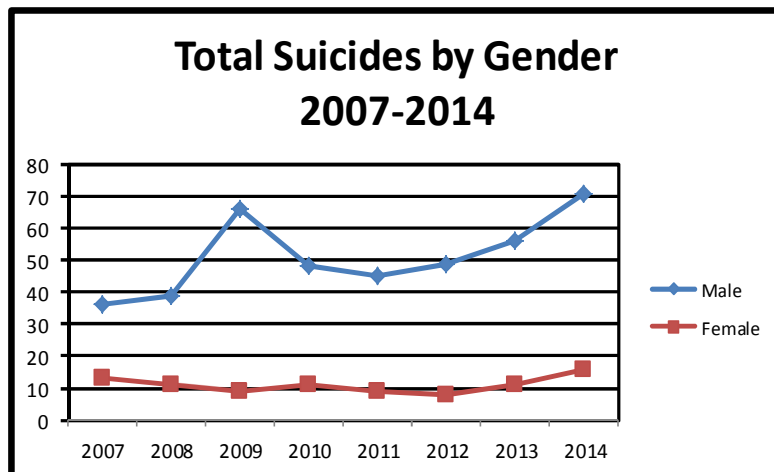


- Adequate and accessible services and funding for mental health diagnosis and treatment are essential for children, adults, and the elderly.
- Men are more likely to die by suicide than women. However women attempt suicide about four times more often than men.
- Men are more likely to use more immediate lethal means (such as firearms) when they are suicidal. As a result, York County would benefit with more effective gun safety education, including the availability of free gunlocks.



## WARNING SIGNS FOR SUICIDE

- ❖ Threatening to hurt or kill oneself or talking about wanting to hurt or kill oneself
- ❖ Looking for ways to kill oneself by seeking access to firearms, available pills, or other means
- ❖ Talking or writing about death, dying, or suicide when these actions are out of the ordinary for the person
- ❖ Feeling hopeless
- ❖ Feeling rage or uncontrolled anger or seeking revenge
- ❖ Acting recklessly or engaging in risky activities-seemingly without thinking
- ❖ Feeling trapped-like there's no way out
- ❖ Increasing alcohol or drug use
- ❖ Withdrawing from friends, family, and society
- ❖ Feeling anxious, agitated, or unable to sleep or sleeping all the time
- ❖ Experiencing dramatic mood changes
- ❖ Seeing no reason for living or having no sense of purpose in life



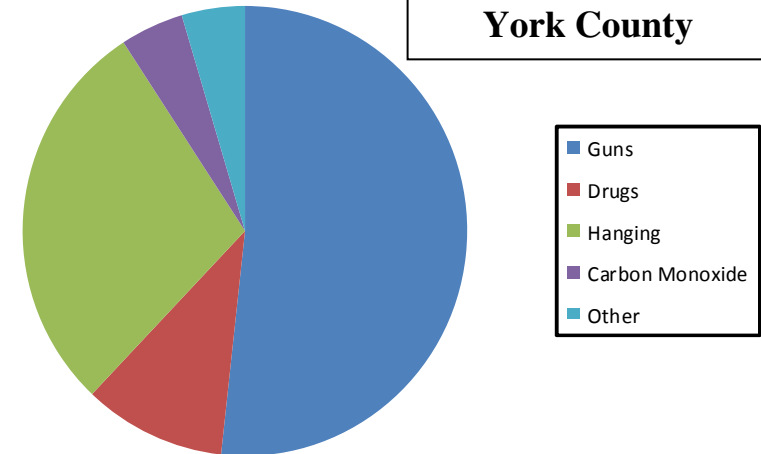
Source: National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

## Risk Factors for Suicide

- Diagnosis of depression
- Previous suicide attempt
- Family history of suicide
- Loss of job, home, money
- Death or terminal illness of a loved one
- Divorce or loss of major, significant relationship
- Loss of health, either real or imagined
- Completed suicide by someone close to the person
- Recent disappointment or rejection
- Expulsion from school/firing from a job
- Sudden loss of freedom/fear of punishment
- Victim of assault or bullying

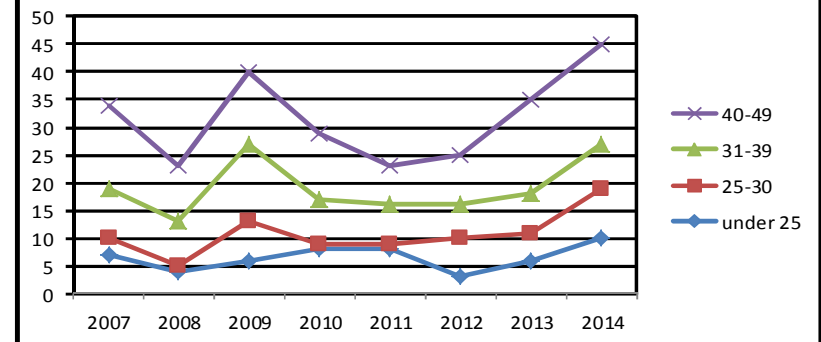


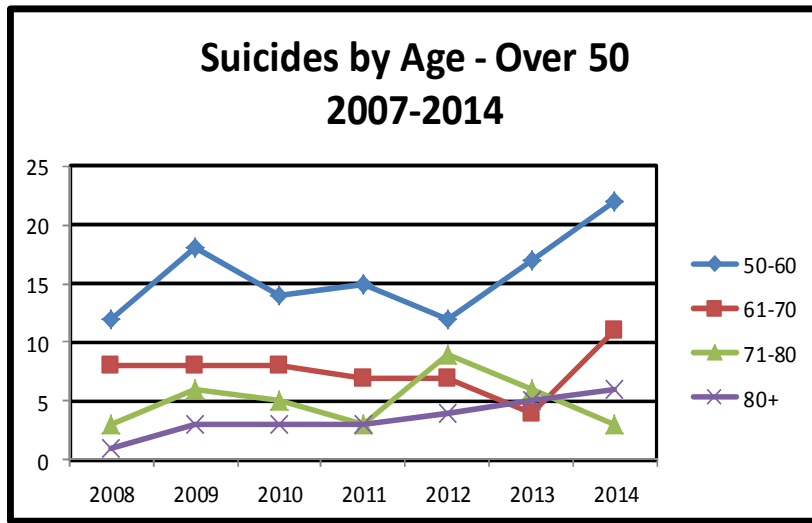
**Method of Suicide  
2007-2014  
York County**



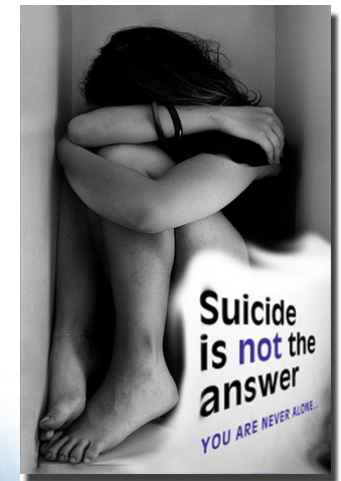
- Age is a factor in suicide risk. In York the two age groups with the highest rates of suicide are those under 25 and ages 40-60.

**Suicides by Age - Under 50  
2007-2014**





- Not everyone who attempts or completes suicide has a mental illness, and not all people with mental illnesses become suicidal. However, mental illnesses – especially depression – are a major risk factor for suicide.
- Research has shown that many people who die by suicide were drinking alcohol in the hours before they died (Kelly, 2009). Alcohol makes sad people feel worse. Alcohol clouds the ability to make good decisions and prompts impulsive acts.
- Youths that bully and youths who are victims of bullying (including cyber bullying) have also been identified as being at high risk for suicide. (SPRC, 2011)



## Suicidal Process

- **Suicides often start as occasional thoughts about suicide and proceed to suicidal ideation.**
- **Most people who think about suicide or develop a plan to kill themselves don't really want to die. They want the pain they are feeling to stop and are unable to see any other alternative.**
- **The suicide process happens over time. The fact that the process takes time for most people means there is time to intervene successfully. There is time to reach out and get help.**