

Elkhart Truth
People's Forum
January 31, 2010

Suicide

Spread the message that there is hope

It was a difficult year for many people in Elkhart County. For 21 people in Elkhart County, the burdens were too heavy. They decided to end their lives in suicide. These deaths were traumatic for their friends and families.

People under constant stress can experience negative thinking patterns and distort what is really going on in their lives. They put a spin on events and aren't in their interpretations, thereby making events more negative than they really are. This type of outlook is common in people with depression and other mood disorders. They tend to downplay the positive and focus only on the negative and feel there is nothing good in their lives. If this continues over a long period of time, they may consider suicide, especially if a truly major negative event happens.

There is good news for persons who may be experiencing these feelings. Depression is treatable with counseling and / or medication. These negative distortions can be identified and corrected so positive changes can be made.

If you or someone you know is displaying these thinking patterns and you believe they may attempt suicide, call 911. If you believe they aren't in immediate danger, call 211 for information on counseling services in Elkhart County. Call the Elkhart County Suicide Prevention Coalition at 523-2119 or go to www.elkhartsuicideprevention.org for a list of qualified counselors who have experience dealing with depression and suicide.

When an appointment is made, make sure the person has transportation and actually goes. There is hope. Choosing life instead of despair and possible suicide is a message all of us can give to friends, family, co-workers and perfect strangers.

Jim Starkey
Elkhart County Suicide Prevention Coalition