

Suicide awareness is prevention

March 6, 2008

The Elkhart Truth

When physical, psychological and situational circumstances bring undue stress into our lives, feelings of depression can develop. Long-term untreated depression can lead to suicide. To prevent suicide in our community, we must first raise our collective awareness and develop a sense of shared responsibility toward each other.

Last year alone, 24 people in Elkhart County took their lives. That incidence is double the state average and four times the homicide rate for the same time.

The consequences for these actions are regrettable. Presumably, these people did not know of or chose not to seek help to resolve their problems.

Numerous articles are published and presentations given each year in Elkhart County by public health representatives addressing suicide prevention. Any group may schedule an onsite presentation by calling Barb at 523-2119. You can also obtain information about suicide prevention online at www.elkhartsuicideprevention.org or www.qrinstitute.com.

The above resources provide what is referred to as gatekeeper training. This, like the Heimlich maneuver and CPR, is designed provide anyone with intervention skills to assist a troubled person to seek professional help.

For those already grieving the loss of a friend or loved one to suicide, Ryan's Place has established adult and child support groups to help those in need. They can be contacted at 535-1000 or www.ryans-place.org.

Ministers in the community are also a valuable resource in times of need.

People who do not read the newspaper may be unaware of the resources cited in this letter. Therefore, I urge those reading this information to post it at their place of business, worship or social gathering so others may become aware of them.

Mike Rynski

Elkhart County Suicide Prevention Coalition