



IKC WISE Team: Suicide Awareness

Suicide is a topic no one really wants to talk about, especially in the local church. However, having conversation around suicide in the local church may save someone's life. This became very clear to me while attending the workshop on suicide at the WISE (Welcoming, Inclusive, Supporting, Encouraging) Conference in Phoenix this year.

- Suicide is the 11th leading cause of death in Indiana according to the latest report from the state of Indiana.
- Males account for eighty percent of all suicide.
- Suicide is the second leading cause of death for people ages 15 to 34.
- The method in which Hoosiers died by suicide include firearms (53%), suffocating to include drowning (25.6 %), poisoning (15.8%) and other means (5.6%).
- Suicide is also the 11th leading cause of death in the state of Kentucky.
- More than three times as many people die by suicide in Kentucky than by homicide.
- Suicide costs Kentucky at total of \$746,659,000 of combined lifetime medical and work loss cost.

Conversation around suicide must take place in our local churches. Rachael Keefe, author of *The Lifesaving Church: Faith Communities and Suicide Prevention*, credits the church for saving her life. Racheal led the discussion at the workshop on suicide at the WISE Conference. She feels when the church is truly acting as the Body of Christ and embodies the love of Christ it can and does save lives.

Rachael concludes the preface of her book: "The church is a community bound together for life through the love of Christ. It is the Body of Christ, as a whole, rather than separate individuals. Jesus asks us to carry one another's burdens. How better to do this than assume responsibility for healing the Body of Christ?"

Working together as the Body of Christ and being the church God dreamed, the local church can gracefully and compassionately discuss suicide, allowing humans to know all are welcome no matter where they find themselves on life's journey.

Grace and peace,
Rev. Jeff McCarn, IKC WISE Team Member
Evangelical UCC
Tell City, IN