

## Nurses Corner:

September is Suicide Awareness Month. Over 44,000 Americans die by suicide every year. Suicide is the 4<sup>th</sup> leading cause of death for people 18-65. For every death there are 25 attempts.

National Suicide Prevention lifeline-**1-800-273-8225**

### **Warning signs:**

Talking about wanting to die  
Looking for ways to kill oneself  
Talking about having no reason to live,  
Giving away prized possessions  
Acting anxious or agitated  
Talking about being in unbearable pain  
Sleeping too little or too much  
Withdrawing or feeling isolated  
Increasing the use of alcohol or drugs  
Showing rage or seeking revenge  
Displaying extreme mood swings  
Talking about being a burden to others  
Exhibiting daring or risk-taking behaviors  
Showing lack of interest in future plans

### **How to help someone with suicidal thoughts**

#### **Ask:**

Ask the person if they think about dying or killing themselves. Don't hesitate to do this- asking will not put the idea in their head, nor will it make them more likely to attempt suicide.

#### **Listen:**

Start a conversation with the person and listen without judging to show you care. Create a safe space for them to share their feeling and vent. DO NOT swear to secrecy.

**Stay:**

Don't leave the person alone. Stay with them or make sure they are in a private, secure place with another caring person until you can get further help.

**Secure:** If you suspect the person could be a harm to themselves, take them seriously. Remove any objects that could be used in a suicide attempt.

**Call:**

Call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline and follow their guidance. If danger for self-harm seems immediate, call 911.

A parent in a class I attended reminded us to say "they died by suicide". It's a new phrase for most of us, but its terms that I consciously use when talking about a person's death.