

Security Health Plan supports training event to prepare public officials for suicide response

“I will never be able to explain what it feels like to hold your child the day they come into this world; and to hold them the day they leave,” Debra Judnick told participants at the recent “Postvention: Train the Trainer” event hosted by the Chippewa County Department of Public Health.

Judnick lost her 15-year old daughter to suicide in 2016. She spoke at the training in hopes of helping better prepare those involved in the aftermath of a suicide. She said there was so much she didn’t know as she went through the tragedy. In hindsight, she said there are better ways for the community to handle its response to suicide. Her message resonated with representatives from area Chippewa County schools, law enforcement agencies, clergy members and health care workers.

The 3-day Postvention training was hosted by the Chippewa County Department of Public Health with funds provided by Security Health Plan. It was designed to help create an integrated community response to suicide and teach communities how to follow up after a tragic sudden death happens.

Suicide is not a topic that is easy for most to talk about. Nor do most people naturally know the best way to follow up, or what to say after a suicide happens. Postvention is a public health, socio-ecological approach that looks at the individual, family, community and society’s response to suicide and provides training on the best way to respond to prevent further death by suicide. The way schools, media, funeral homes, law enforcement, businesses and clergy follow up after a sudden death, including suicide, can help prevent other suicides from happening.

“A suicide death has a devastating impact on a community; that is why as a health system we recognize that equipping communities with resources to prevent suicide is important,” said Jay Shrader, Security’s Vice President of Community Health.

According to the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, there are 123 completed suicides every day. After the Postvention training, attendees were asked to lead two trainings in two years.

For Judnick, the grief of losing her daughter will never end but she hopes her story can help just one person.

“Grief? It never goes away. It will hit you like a storm,” Judnick said. “But I am going to keep talking about it and keep fighting. This is the approach I am going to take.”

Judnick now runs Journey on Janna, an organization whose mission is to help others with unmet needs by creating a positive impact on the lives they touch. The organization hosts events and helps people make connections to teach coping skills, relieve stress and assist with resources. To learn more go to www.journeyonjanna.com.