

EFPA, the European Federation of Psychologists' Associations, joins the efforts in 'Reaching out and saving lives' on the occasion of World Suicide Prevention Day

10th September is World Suicide Prevention Day. The theme of the 2015 World Suicide Prevention Day (WSPD) '*Preventing Suicide: Reaching Out and Saving Lives*' encourages all psychology associations in Europe to consider the role that offering support may play in combating suicide. EFPA supports the initiative of the International Association for Suicide Prevention (IASP) and the World Health Organization (WHO) and agrees that the existing efforts need to be promoted and extended.

One death every 40 seconds

Every year, over 800,000 people die from suicide; this roughly corresponds to one death every 40 seconds. The number of lives lost each year due to suicide exceeds the number of deaths due to homicide and war combined. There were approximately 60,000 suicide deaths in EU member states in 2010, but there are also great differences between the countries: suicide rates are lower in southern European countries and highest in the Baltic States and Central Europe. Older people are one of the most vulnerable groups in this regard. Moreover each and every suicide entails a high price in terms of suffering and pain of those who think of ending their lives and their relatives and close friends.

Nevertheless, suicide is preventable and positive trends were seen over the last decades. The theme of the 2015 World Suicide Prevention Day (WSPD) '*Preventing Suicide: Reaching Out and Saving Lives*' encourages us all to consider the role that offering support may play in combating suicide.

'Psychological approaches need resources to be able to help'

According to EFPA psychological approaches play an important role in reaching out to prevent suicide as this concerns communication and relationships – both essentially psychological. Scientific knowledge suggests ways in which we might most effectively tackle the problem by empowering parents and families, developing high quality kindergartens and schools, building safe and inclusive neighborhoods, and giving easy access to psychological help when needed (including early identification and intervention). Through these approaches, psychologists aim to promote positive social relationships that will help prevent psychological distress of all kinds, including those that lead to suicide. A good childhood lasts a lifetime.

Psychologists as a professional group are often the ones developing and implementing public-health interventions, such as preparing national suicide prevention plans, educating the media about their role in suicide prevention; are engaged in recognizing people in need, such as in screening and assessment in different situations; carrying out research; providing psychological interventions to help people in distress or prevent higher risks and supporting others in developing their psychological skills in this area. That is why, according to EFPA, psychologists have an important leadership role with both local and national governments and they need to be sufficiently resourced to carry out their work.

Dr Tony Wainwright, EFPA Board Prevention and Intervention stated: 'Last year the WHO launched the first Global report on suicide. We hope that the cost-effectiveness and usefulness of psychological interventions are recognised even more widely to reach those people most at risk.'

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World Health Organization Website: http://www.who.int/mental_health/prevention/suicide/wspd/en/

International Association for Suicide Prevention: <https://www.iasp.info/wspd/>