



**October 10, 2019: World Mental Health Day 2019: Suicide is largely preventable**

**EFPA: Psychological care and knowledge can save lives**

#WorldMentalHealthDay

<http://efpa.eu/news/world-mental-health-day-oct-10-2019suicide-is-largely-preventable>

The World Health Organization (WHO) chose suicide as the theme for the **World Mental Health Day 2019**. This choice reflects the importance of suicide and the need to intervene preemptively. Suicide kills close to 800 000 people every year – which is more than 2 000 per day. However, these large numbers of deaths by suicide are not inevitable. Suicide varies significantly across country, and period, ranging from less than 5 to more than 15 suicides per 100.000. This variation suggests that there are several psychological and social interventions that can be implemented. As Rory O’Connor, Professor of Health Psychology and researcher at the Suicidal Behaviour Research Laboratory, University of Glasgow, said:

“Although the global suicide rates have decreased in recent years, the reality is that these decreases have not been universal and in many countries including in the UK, the USA and Australia deaths by suicide are on the rise. Suicide prevention is everyone’s responsibility, and it is only through working together that we will effectively address this public health crisis.”

Suicide is a multifactorial process with significant associations with mental health disturbance, psychosocial factors, substance use and suffering associated with physical illnesses. This complexity implies that it is both an individual issue and a societal one – influenced by many cultural aspects. Suicide is most frequent in men and generally in adults over 70. Other risk factors can be identified to help governments focus on particular groups.

Given the seriousness of the problem and the severity of its implications, the focus needs to be on prevention and early management of attempts. The WHO focus their recommendations for interventions in: 1) restricting access to means, 2) helping young people develop skills to cope with stressors, 3) early identification and management of people with suicidal ideation or who have made a suicide attempt, 4) working with the media towards responsible reporting of suicide.

These interventions benefit from Psychology’s knowledge and psychologists’ interventions. Changing of meanings that increase suicide ideation, reducing hopelessness, promoting skills development, fostering communication, and improving it; are all core activities of psychologists. The variations across countries suggest that rates can be reduced significantly under the proper conditions and interventions. Governments and societies should work towards achieving this using psychology and psychologists as essential resources.

**More:**

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