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The Human Services Newsletter of Queens

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SUICIDE IN NYC ADOLESCENTS

According to the NYC Dept. of Health and Mental Hygiene, suicide is the third leading cause of death in NYC adolescents as in those throughout the nation. Nationally, the prevalence of self-reported suicide attempts among teenagers has remained between eight and nine percent since 1999. However, in NYC, the percentage of adolescents reporting suicide attempts has risen to ten percent (2005).

Female adolescents are more likely to report feeling sad or suicidal and are more than twice as likely to report suicidal thoughts and are more likely to report having tried suicide. However, since statistics show that males have a three times higher death rate from completed suicide, these figures do not tell the whole story.

Discrepancies also vary across racial and ethnic groups. Persistent sadness is reported more often among Hispanic girls than girls of other racial and ethnic groups. Suicide attempts among adolescent Hispanic females is also more prevalent. Male Hispanic adolescents also report higher feelings of persistent sadness.

Teens who identify as lesbian, gay or bisexual, or are questioning their sexual identity also have a much higher rate of suicidal thoughts and behaviors. Indeed almost one in three of those studied, report an attempted suicide in the last year as opposed to one in twelve among their heterosexual peers.

Parents, teachers, and others interacting with teens should watch for signs of depression and seek appropriate help if they suspect depression. Signs include a persistently sad or irritable mood; changes in appetite, weight, or sleeping habits; a lack of interest in activities once enjoyed; and difficulty concentrating, intense feelings of guilt, or feelings of worthlessness or hopelessness.

Addition information and help regarding suicidal thoughts and mental health problems among adolescents can be obtained by calling 1-800-lifenet (1-800-543-3688 or 1-212-982-5284). You can also call 311 and ask for LifeNet. For information on Queens treatment programs, you may call the QCSW Information and Referral Dept., 718 468-8025. **Always call 911 for medical and psychiatric emergencies.**

Information can also be obtained at the following websites:

National Institute of Mental Health: www.nimh.nih.gov/publicat/depression.cfm

NYS State Office of Mental Health: www.omh.state.ny.us/omhweb/speak/speakteens.htm

American Psychiatric Association: www.healthyminds.org

(This article is based in part on information contained in NYC Vitals Signs, March 2008, a publication of the NYC Dept. of Health and Mental Hygiene.)

"Over 86 Years of Serving the Queens Community"

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Our Calendar of Events will resume in the next issue, ***Please include us on your mailing list, if you would like your meetings listed in the Human Services Newsletter of Queens.*** Information for the calendar may be sent to QCSW@aol.com or by fax to 718 464-8811.

OCTOBER & NOVEMBER EVENTS

On Friday, October 3rd from 8:30 to 11:00 AM, QICA will hold its 26th Annual Legislative Forum at Queens Community House, Kew Gardens Community Center, 80-02 Kew Gardens Rd., Suite 202, 2nd Fl, Kew Gardens, NY 11415. For more information, please contact Bruce Cunningham, Executive Director, Queens Interagency Council on Aging, 120-55 Queens Boulevard, Room 319, Kew Gardens, NY 11424; Phone: (718) 268-5954; Fax: (718) 268-5952; Email: qicany@aol.com.

On Tuesday, October 7th, 2008, the NYC Department for the Aging and over 2,000 seniors will participate in the 7th Annual Senior Stroll at Midland Beach on Staten Island. With views of the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge and Sandy Hook, it's a perfect location to celebrate exercise and healthy aging. The event is free and open to the public. A registration form is available at http://www.nyc.gov/html/dfta/downloads/pdf/stroll_regform.pdf. For additional info., please call 311.

On Tuesday, October 21, from 9:30 AM - 12:00 Noon, New York Cares will lead *Starting a Volunteer Program*. This training is for organizations new to volunteer programs and will provide the tools they need to start their own program. Topics to be covered include: understanding volunteering; planning a program; recruiting and placing volunteers; orientation, training and effective supervision of volunteers; retention and recognition ideas; and evaluation of your program. Note: this is a course for beginners, not for organizations that already have an established volunteer program. It will be held in Room 213, Queens Borough Hall, 120-55 Queens Boulevard, Kew Gardens, NY 11424.

On Friday, October 24, 2008, QCSW will sponsor the 86th Annual Awards Luncheon and Networking Exhibition at Terrace on the Park, in Flushing Meadow Park. The Networking Exhibition will take place from 11:15 AM - 12:30 PM and the Luncheon 12:30 PM - 2 PM. Sponsorship opportunities and exhibition tables are still available. For information, please call (718) 468-8025 or E-mail QCSW@aol.com.

On Wednesday, October 31st, 2008, the 24th Annual Mayoral Conference on Alzheimer's Disease will take place. For information, call (212) 442-3086.

On Wednesday, November 19, from 10 AM to Noon, BP Helen Marshall's Domestic Violence Task Force, in partnership with QCSW, will sponsor a training, *Domestic Violence and the Holidays*. It will be held in Room 213, Queens Borough Hall, 120-55 Queens Boulevard, Kew Gardens, NY 11424.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE TRAININGS

QCSW has been sponsoring a series of twelve Domestic Violence training sessions for human service professionals held at the QCSW office on Tuesday mornings from 10 AM and 12:30 PM. The series will begin again in January. In addition, QCSW has partnered with the Queens Public Library to sponsor a series of Domestic Violence programs for the public in Spanish and English. Programs are free of charge to participants but registration is requested. Stay tuned for further information, or please contact Bette Engel at 718 468-8025.

QUEENS HUMAN SERVICE MEETINGS*(Updated 8/8/08)*

QCSW urges readers to confirm meeting dates, times & places as they frequently change. Please note on the list below, "QBH" refers to Queens Borough Hall, Rm. 213 & "QCSW" refers to the QCSW office. Telephone numbers are in area code 718 unless otherwise listed. We request and welcome additional listings, updates, and corrections and will do our best to share that information in future issues.

In this issue we are listing regular monthly meetings and as space permits additional special trainings and workshops. Please submit material for publication as early as possible.

Committee	Meeting Day & Time	Place	Contact
Qns. Council On MR/DD			
Full Council Meeting	1st Mon, 9:30am	Call for Info.	M. Ardito, 212 273-6167
QMRD Consumer Council	Call for info.	B. Fineson	C. Ionta, 718 217-5912
Day Services	1st Wed., 9:30 am	Call for Info.	J. Davide, 718 380-3000
Residential	Call for Info.	Call for Info.	718-380-3000
Parents	Call for Info.	Call for Info.	B. Thomas, 718 776-8842
Queens MH Council			
Full Council Meeting	1st Thurs, 9:30am	Holliswood Hosp.	Nat Etrog, 718 869-8822
Juvenile Justice	Call for Info.	Call for Info.	J. Buffone, 718 779-1234
Children	Call for Info.	Call for Info.	S. Clayton 718-776 8181 x345
Geriatrics	4th Thurs., 9:30am	Pride of Judea	Jane Bardavid, 718 224-0566
Legislative	2nd Wed., 9:30am	QCSW	Marlene Verber 718 291-4848
Crisis Committee	2nd Thurs. 9:30 am (Every other Month)	Holliswood Hosp.	Laura Zimmerman 718-779-1234
Criminal Just. Comm.	1st Fri. 1:00 p.m.	Call for info.	Karen Dubin McKnight 718-392-3516
Client Committee	2 nd Fri. Each month	Elmhurst Hosp.	Carl Mautner 718 657-0175
Other Councils and BoroWide Groups			
Qns Task Force Hsg Court	Call for Info.	Civil Court	C. Peterson, 718 657-0599
BP's Task Force Agnst. Sexual Assault, Domestic Violence Elder Abuse	4th Wed., 10:00am	QBH	K. Moore 718 286-2900
Qns Borough-Based Cncl* (Child & Adolescent services)	4th Mon., 9:30 a.m.	DOE Reg. Office 90-27 Sutphin Blvd.	T. Liotta, 718 264-4580
Qns Interagency Cncl on Aging	Call for Info.	Kew Gardens	B. Cunningham 268-5954

(Continued on p4)

QUEENS HUMAN SERVICE MEETINGS (*Continued from p3*)

Other Councils and BoroWide Groups

JSPOA-Social Svc. Task Force	1st Wed. 9:15 am	Theo Jackn, Sr. Ctr.	Dawn Pemberton, 718 657-6509
Queens Intergroup/ Alcohol	AA.org. For info	Q. Intergroup Off.	718-520-5021
Qns Dir. Of Vols. In Agencies	Call for Info.	QCSW	A. Nurse, 718 468-8025
Boro. Pres.'s Task Force for Persons with Disabilities	3rd Tues., 5:00 pm	QBH	Seema Rambaran 718 286-2677
Boro. Pres.'s Task Force on Citizenship & Immigration	Quarterly	Call for Info.	Susie Tannenbaum, 718 286-2741

Reminder: QCSW urges readers to confirm meeting dates, times & places as they frequently change. We request and welcome additional listings, updates, and corrections.

FEDERAL STIMULUS CHECKS

Since May, 2008, the US Treasury has been sending out economic stimulus payments of up to \$600 (\$1,200 for married couples). To receive a payment, taxpayers must have a valid Social Security number, \$3,000 of income and file a 2007 federal tax return. Retirees, disabled veterans and low-wage workers, usually are exempt from filing tax returns, must do so this year in order to receive a stimulus payment.

Both people listed on a "married filing jointly" return must have valid SSNs to qualify for the payment — if only one has a valid SSN, neither can receive the payment. (There is an exception for members of the military who file joint returns.) Additional money may be available to those with children, to qualify, a child must be eligible under the Child Tax Credit & have a valid Soc. Sec. number. The payments phase out at certain income levels, but even those with high incomes may receive a reduced payment.

According to the NYS Office for the Aging, there are more than 400,000 New Yorkers still eligible to receive a stimulus check, but who have not yet filed. Almost 70% of these people are older adults. Outreach material or tax forms, can be requested by calling 800 342-9871 or emailing gail.myers@ofa.state.ny.us.

Warning — Scam Artists Are Contacting Taxpayers about the Stimulus Payments

The IRS is not e-mailing or calling taxpayers about their stimulus payment. So if someone claiming to be from the IRS calls or e-mails you about the payments and asks you for a Social Security, bank account or credit card number or similar information, it's a scam. The scammers are trying to get your personal and financial information so they can empty your bank account, run up charges on your credit card and more. Find out more — see IR-2008-11, IRS Warns of New E-Mail and Telephone Scams Using the IRS Name; Advance Payment Scams Starting.

(From: <http://www.apa.org/pi/aging/depression.html>)

WARNING SIGNS OF SUICIDE

According to The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, Suicide can be prevented. While some suicides occur without any outward warning, most people who are suicidal do give warnings. Prevent the suicide of loved ones by learning to recognize the signs of someone at risk, taking those signs seriously and knowing how to respond to them.

Warning signs of serious depression or suicide:

Unrelenting low mood

Pessimism

Hopelessness

Desperation

Anxiety, psychic pain and inner tension

Withdrawal

Sleep problems

Increased alcohol and/or other drug use

Recent impulsiveness and taking unnecessary risks

Threatening suicide or expressing a strong wish to die

Giving away prized possessions

Sudden or impulsive purchase of a firearm

Obtaining other means of killing oneself such as poisons or medications

Unexpected rage or anger

The emotional crises that usually precede suicide are often recognizable and treatable. Although most depressed people are not suicidal, most suicidal people are depressed. Serious depression can be manifested in obvious sadness, but often it is rather expressed as a loss of pleasure or withdrawal from activities that had been enjoyable. One can help prevent suicide through early recognition and treatment of depression and other psychiatric illnesses.

For further information, go to their website: <http://www.afsp.org>.

SUICIDE PREVENTION EDUCATION AND AWARENESS KIT

The NYS Office of Mental Health has a very successful program entitled "SPEAK", Suicide Prevention Education and Awareness Kit. While focusing primarily upon suicidality, the program's mandate also had "the important secondary goal of reducing the stigma associated with getting help for emotional problems or mental illness. Stigma frequently surrounds mental illness, so many people try to hide their symptoms and avoid getting treatment out of fear of embarrassment. It is important for all New Yorkers to know that mental illnesses can be successfully treated, and that recovery is possible." Information continues to be available on the New York State Office of Mental Health website and on national websites such as www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org.

RISK FACTORS FOR SUICIDE IN OLDER ADULTS

Depression and suicide are significant public health issues for older adults. Depression is one of the most common mental disorders experienced by elders, but fortunately is treatable by a variety of means.

Depression is not only a prevalent disorder but is also a pervasive problem. Depressed older adults, like younger persons, tend to use health services at high rates, engage in poorer health behaviors, and evidence what is known as "excess disability." Depression is also associated with suicide. Older adults have the highest rates of suicide of any age group, and this is particularly pronounced among men.

Several efficacious treatments are available for geriatric depression but seem to be underused. Pharmacotherapy and several versions of psychotherapy, including interpersonal, brief psychodynamic, problem-solving, and cognitive-behavioral, significantly reduce depressive symptoms. Interestingly, when given thorough descriptions of these treatments, older adults state a preference for receiving psychologically based treatments.

A number of factors can increase a person's risk of suicide. These include easy access to lethal means (e.g., having a gun in the house), a history of suicidal thoughts or previous suicide attempts. Lethal means for the elderly sometimes includes the refusal to eat or take medications.

Suicidal thoughts or behavior can also occur as a symptom of various mood, personality, anxiety, psychotic or substance abuse disorders. For older adults, the risk of suicide is not often associated with Depression. Chemical imbalances in the brain, heredity and stress (e.g., due to emotional, physical, financial or legal difficulties) all play a part in whether or not person is at risk for depression. The following may also increase the risk of suicide in older adults:

- Social isolation. Older adults living alone and those with limited social contacts are at high risk of suicidal thoughts or behavior. This puts those who are single, widowed or divorced at higher risk.
- Gender. Men commit suicide four times more often than women and the risk of suicide for men increases with age. Older men are especially at risk of suicide within six months after the loss of a spouse.
- Lack of outside interests. Retirement involves a loss of structured, productive activity. It may also involve a change in role or social status and loss of income. These factors may increase the risk of suicide.
- Diagnosis of serious physical condition or terminal illness. Older adults are prone to variety of serious medical conditions such as heart disease, stroke, diabetes, cancer and Parkinson's disease. In Addition, hip fractures, macular degeneration and vitamin deficiencies are common ailments among elderly people. These or any type of chronic or debilitating medical problem or terminal illness can lead to depression, which can increase a person's suicide risk of suicide.
- Recent personal loss. Older adults commonly face traumatic personal loss, such as the death or chronic illness of a spouse or family member. In addition, the stress of caring for an ill or disabled loved one can increase the risk of depression in older adults.
- Alcoholism. The use of or dependence on alcohol can increase an adult person's risk of suicide by masking other disorders, such as depression. It can also decrease inhibitions and cause people to act more freely on impulses or feelings.
- Increase dependence with change of living conditions. The loss of independence by moving from long-time home or to assisted living or other care facilities may increase an older adult's risk of suicide.
- Poverty. Older adults with a low social and economic status are at higher risk for suicide.

(From: Your total health – a service of NBC and iVillage

<http://yourtotalhealth.ivillage.com/suicide-in-older-adults.html> & <http://www.apa.org/pi/aging/depression.htm>)

RESOURCE DIRECTORY**MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT**

New York Psychotherapy and Counseling Center
NYPCC's Child and Family Mental Health Centers

Bushwick: 1420 Bushwick Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11207

East New York: 796H Drew Street, Brooklyn, NY 11208

CONTACT: Cruz Fuksman, Community Liaison, (917) 470-8265

NYPCC provides a range of services to children (age5+), adolescents and adults who are having difficulty functioning at home, in school and/or with peers. Staff consists of bilingual, bicultural therapists as well as board-certified child psychiatrists. Their services include: individual verbal therapy; play therapy; art therapy; medication therapy, education, and management; family therapy; psychiatric evaluations; behavior modification; advocacy and linkage with community services; and community services; and crisis intervention at school and at home. Medicaid accepted.

SUICIDE PREVENTION RESOURCE

LifeNet

CONTACT: 311 or 1-800-LifeNet/(800-543-3658) 24hours a day/ 7 days a week,

Spanish 1-877-AYUDESE; (1-877-298-3373), Chinese 1-877-990-8585.

For other languages, call LIFENET and ask for an interpreter.

TTY number is (212) 982-5284. www.mhaofnyc.org

Operated by the Mental Health Association of NYC in partnership with NYC Department of Health & Mental Hygiene, LifeNet has the City's largest mental health information and referral database and can direct you to key services in every borough. It has information about the languages spoken and fee structures including sliding scales and insurance. They also will dispatch New York City mobile crisis units.

VOCATIONAL SERVICES FOR PEOPLE WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

Bernard Fineson Developmental Disabilities Service Office (DDSO)

CONTACT: 718-217-4242

718-641-8295

NYS Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (OMRDD) Employment training program will refer candidates, pay their wages, and cover NYS Worker's Compensation up to an 18 month period for organizations who support people with various Queens Organizations who support people with developmental disabilities can inform agencies that are willing and able to find the right workers for jobs within your organization. The Government provides tax incentives for hiring individuals with developmental disabilities.

Please see Page 8 for information on submitting material for the RESOURCE DIRECTORY.

