

# SUICIDE AND THE BODY OF CHRIST

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TOWARDS A THEOLOGY OF RELEVANT HEALING AND WHOLENESS



# GETTING INTO THE TOPIC ...

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- Who am I and why are we talking about this?
  - Rev. Rebecca Spooner LPC, NCC
  - [www.WellspringRenewalCenter.com](http://www.WellspringRenewalCenter.com)
- Before we begin, some questions to ponder:
  - How has suicide touched your life? Take a moment to remember that person or persons
  - Was the church present? How or how not?
  - What are your questions about Suicide? Take a moment to write them down and we will try to cover them today.



# BASIC FACTS

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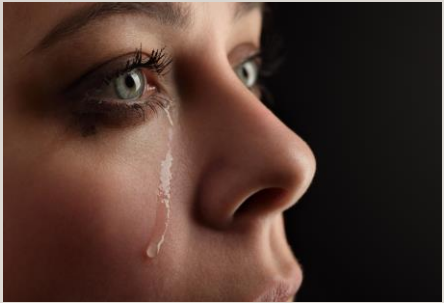


- From the CDC:
  - Every 13-15 minutes someone in the US takes their own life – 35,000 suicides a year
  - Christians and general population
  - Suicide kills more young people, the elderly and veterans (2012 Study of the Department of Veterans Affairs)
  - Suicide is the 10<sup>th</sup> leading cause of death in the US, the 3<sup>rd</sup> leading cause of death in 15-24 year olds, 4<sup>th</sup> for adults 18-65 with the highest increase in males 50+ y/o
  - Suicide > among men (79% of all suicides), but Suicidal ideation > among women, and >rates of depression

# WHAT HAPPENS TO THE SURVIVORS?

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- Suicide leaves behind an average of 6-10 survivors
- Each year, hundreds of thousands of people will grieve the loss of a loved one to suicide including many of our us and our church members.
- Survivors face a “complicated grief” – loss from death, but then the trauma from the suicide
- Survivors will be bombarded with emotion – all of them are normal



# THE BIBLE AND SUICIDE

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- The Bible does not have a lot to say about suicide
- References include:
  - Abimelech – Judges 9:54
  - Saul – I Samuel 31:4 and then his armor bearer vv. 4-6
  - Ahithophel – 2 Samuel 17:23
  - Zimri – I Kings 16:18
  - Judas – Matthew 27:5





# WHAT CHRISTIANS BELIEVE ABOUT SUICIDE

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- Opposing views
- Hope – Romans 8:38-39 Nothing can separate us from God's love – even suicide
- Suicide comes from an illness – depression, anxiety, substance abuse – just as God does not hold cancer against a person – can God hold depression and hopelessness?



# SUICIDE PREVENTION

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- Know the warning signs
  - History of depression and substance abuse
  - Talk about death or dying soon
  - Withdrawing from friends and family – isolation
  - Extreme mood swings
  - Talk about being a burden
  - Loss of a sense of humor
  - Giving away prized possessions
  - Stressful life events
  - Exposure to another's suicide
  - Previous suicide attempts of a family history of suicide

# SUICIDE PREVENTION

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- TALK ABOUT IT!! Find out if there is a plan or just thoughts. It's okay to talk about it. They will want to talk about it.
- Equip yourself and others
- Have a list of resources handy:
  - 1-800-273-TALK
  - 1-800-SUICIDE
  - American Foundation for Suicide Prevention
  - Alliance of Hope for Suicide Survivors
  - Counseling Services
  - 911 for Welfare checks or ER for assessment



# SO WHAT? NOW WHAT DO WE DO?

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- Questions from the floor...
- Revisit the first questions. How has suicide touched your life? Was the body of Christ present or absent? How?
- What do you believe about faith and suicide?
- What can you and/or your church family do to address the issues of suicide?
- What do you want to do with the information you heard today?