

 

**6 October 2022**

**MEDIA RELEASE**

**New Hertfordshire suicide prevention campaign and Zero Suicide Alliance training page launched as part of World Suicide Prevention Day**

Health and care partners across Hertfordshire have launched a new suicide prevention campaign offering FREE online Zero Suicide Alliance training to everyone.

The #LetsTalkAboutSuicideHerts campaign is being launched as part of World Mental Health Day (MHD) on the 10th October and aims to encourage conversations and reduce the stigma around talking about suicide. The campaign has been created by Integrated Care Partnerships across Hertfordshire and Essex in association with Thurrock and Brentwood Mind and seeks to raise awareness of the online Zero Suicide Alliance suicide prevention training which is FREE to ALL at <https://letstalkaboutsuicide.co.uk>.

The training focuses on the three key elements of See, Say, Signpost: See the problem, Say the words, Signpost to support. It gives people the knowledge and the confidence to talk to someone who might be at risk of, or thinking about, suicide. Individuals and organisations are encouraged to log onto the website and take the training- this FREE 20-minute video could help save a life!

***Hertfordshire County Council’s Executive Member for Public Health and Community Safety, Morris Bright MBE, said:***

“We are committed to making Hertfordshire a place where no one feels that suicide is their only option, and everyone has the opportunity to lead a healthy and fulfilling life.

“With mental health issues increasing since the start of the pandemic, it’s more important than ever that we all play our part in looking out for each other, so we would urge everyone to give up 20 minutes of their time to do the Zero Suicide Alliance training.”

Every year as part of World Mental Health Day on the 10th October, organisations and communities around the world come together to raise awareness of how they can create a world where fewer people die by suicide and struggle with their mental health.

Suffolk residents will be able to be part of World Suicide Prevention Day by taking the training. They can find out what is happening and share the message, by following the hashtags #MHDHerts and #LetsTalkAboutSuicideHerts on social media and retweeting to their own followers.

The last few years have been challenging for everyone and have meant changes to everyone's lives; 2020 saw the world hit by an unexpected pandemic with 2022 seeing the cost-of-living rise to its highest level since 1982. Mental health has been affected more than ever. As a national organisation and throughout the pandemic, Mind has not stopped supporting those in need. In fact, we have been busier than ever, taking over 119,000 phone calls from people in crisis with over 18 million visits to our website.

The sad truth is that suicide continues to rise, with suicidal thoughts affecting thousands of people every day, now more than ever. In the UK a life is lost every 2 hours to suicide. Suicide continues to be the leading cause of death in men under 50, with more men dying by suicide than of cancer, heart attack, heart disease or in car accidents every year. In addition, suicide in women in their early 20s is the highest it’s been for two decades.

We want to encourage people to talk about their feelings and emotions and help them to feel less afraid to address the question of suicide with loved ones, friends or colleagues.

***Nadine Winiberg, Engagement Lead, Suicide Prevention Training said***: 'Talking about suicide with someone you feel may be struggling may just save their life. Saying the words to someone may seem scary but it is important to be direct and open, saying the word does not put the thought in someone's head. With this training we hope to highlight the importance of recognising those early signs of someone who may be feeling suicidal or having suicidal thoughts.'

Every life lost is one too many. What if the conversation you had with someone was their last? You may only get one opportunity to save a life.

If you are a business and would like your company to get involved and take the training please visit our website, <https://letstalkaboutsuicide.co.uk/>

Please contact suicideprevention@tbmind.org.uk where we can guide you through every step of the FREE training.

If you’re feeling suicidal and need urgent help or if you’re worried about someone you know, help is available from the services below:

Please dial NHS 111 and select option 2 if you are experiencing a mental health crisis. You will be connected to the contact centre where trained staff will provide appropriate support and advice 24 hours a day/ 365 days of the year.

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