



NEWS

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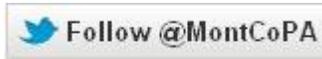
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Montgomery County Suicide Prevention Taskforce Partners with Montgomery County Community College to Spread the Message: With Help Comes Hope

Norristown, PA (March 23, 2016) – Suicide affects everyone. Every year, millions of Americans are directly affected by the more than 37,000 suicides and hundreds of thousands of suicide attempts made by friends or loved ones. Montgomery County is no exception. Over the last eight years, 790 family members, friends, and neighbors from Montgomery County were lost to suicide. Yet suicide is preventable and there is a tremendous effort underway in Montgomery County to save every life and end suicide. With help comes hope.

The mission of the Montgomery County Suicide Prevention Taskforce (SPTF) is to develop and implement strategies to reduce the risk of suicide in Montgomery County through the collaborative efforts of community agencies and service providers.

The SPTF is a collaborative effort of the Montgomery County Human Services Offices, with participation by service organizations and interested community members. The SPTF meets monthly, alternating between subcommittees focusing on children and adult populations. Taskforce members meet to share resources, plan, and implement ways to end suicide.

On March 14th and 15th, students from Montgomery County Community College (MCCC) utilized their spring break to assist the Taskforce by participating in the Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST) delivered by Taskforce member Eric Smith of ACCESS Services. Students learned vital intervention skills and, after 16 hours of intense training, they are now not only ambassadors for hope, but invaluable resources to their schools, families, friends, and communities.

On Wednesday, March 16th, the students joined Taskforce members at the Human Services Center in Norristown for a day of service. They spent the morning preparing resource kits for Montgomery County's elementary, middle, and high schools, as well as local colleges and universities. The kits are Taskforce tote bags containing Suicide Crisis Prevention and Intervention Resource Guides, information for families and individuals, and information about training opportunities. Many of the materials for the kits were donated by active Taskforce members, including The Horsham Clinic, the VA Hospital in Coatesville, and many more. Over lunch, the students enjoyed presentations from Community Connections and the Montgomery County Office of Mental Health's Coordinator of Peer Support. In the afternoon, the Taskforce presented inspirational videos about hope and healing, followed by a meaningful wrap-up discussion facilitated by Eileen Roth from MCCC and Taskforce member Abby Grasso from Brooke Glen Behavioral Health Hospital. The Taskforce will now begin the process of delivering the resource kits to local schools.

The students aren't finished yet. They received boxes of resources and materials from the Taskforce, which they are taking back to the MCCC Blue Bell and Pottstown campuses to share with classmates.

The Montgomery County Suicide Prevention Taskforce is committed to ending suicide in Montgomery County, and is always interested in collaborative partnerships like the one with the Community College. Groups interested in partnering around a training or event may contact Anna Trout with the Montgomery County Department of Behavioral Health/Developmental Disabilities at atrout@montcopa.org.

For more information, please visit the Taskforce website:

www.montcopa.org/suicidepreventiontaskforce.

Suicide Warning Signs:

The below signs may mean someone is at risk for suicide. Risk is greater if a behavior is new or has recently increased in frequency or intensity, and if it seems related to a painful event, loss, or change.

- Talking about wanting to die or kill oneself
- Looking for ways to kill oneself, such as searching online or buying a gun
- Talking about feeling hopeless or having no reason to live
- Talking about feeling trapped or in unbearable pain
- Talking about being a burden to others
- Increasing the use of alcohol or drugs
- Acting anxious or agitated, or behaving recklessly
- Sleeping too little or too much

- Withdrawing or feeling isolated
- Showing rage or talking about seeking revenge
- Displaying extreme mood swings
- Giving away prized possessions
- Getting affairs in order, making arrangements
- Preoccupation with death

What to Do:

If someone you know exhibits warning signs of suicide:

- Take it seriously
- Tell the person why you are concerned
- Don't be afraid to ask if he/she is suicidal
- Encourage the person to seek professional help immediately
- If it is a crisis, do not leave the person alone
- Remove any firearms, alcohol, drugs, or sharp objects that could be used in a suicide attempt
- Call 9-1-1, the U.S. National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK, or Local Crisis Support (see phone numbers below)
- Take the person to an emergency room or seek help from a medical or mental health professional
- Offer encouragement and support after the crisis

Local Crisis Support:

- **Adult Mobile Crisis Support**, available 24 hours a day/7 days a week at **1-855-634-4673**
- **Children's Crisis Support Program**, available 24 hours a day/7 days a week at **1-888-435-7414**

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:

- **1-800-273-TALK (8255)** – Veterans press 1

For more information on the Montgomery County Suicide Prevention Taskforce, please contact Anna Trout, Montgomery County Department of Behavioral Health/Developmental Disabilities, at 610-278-5663 or via email at atrout@montcopa.org.



Students from Montgomery County Community College helped members of the Montgomery County Suicide Prevention Task Force assemble resource kits for Montgomery County's elementary, middle, and high schools, as well as local colleges and universities.