

SUICIDE AND THE BODY OF CHRIST

TOWARDS A THEOLOGY OF RELEVANT HEALING AND WHOLENESS



GETTING INTO THE TOPIC ...

- Who am I and why are we talking about this?
 - Rev. Rebecca Spooner LPC, NCC
 - 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.



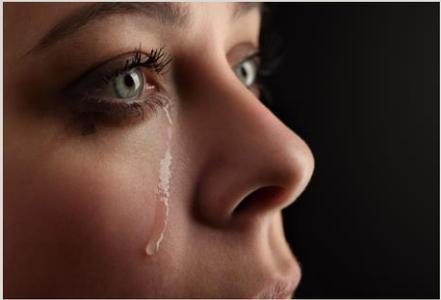
BASIC FACTS



- 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 10th leading cause of death in the US, the 3rd leading cause of death in 15-24 year olds, 4th 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?

- 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

- 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

- 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



- 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

- 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?

- 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?