



# Suicide Prevention Month

As many of you know September is Suicide Prevention Month. Washington typically has higher rates of death by suicide than the national averages. This year is no exception. WMHCA has been participating in several webinars and meetings during the pandemic and we want to share that information with our members. At this time we want to focus on Suicide Prevention. We have also compiled resources regarding suicide awareness and suicide prevention training.

Behavioral health impacts are seen in phases when we are faced with disasters and symptoms tend to peak during the disillusionment phase, which is 6 to 9 months post disaster. Depression is one of the most common emotional responses heading into the disillusionment phase. More than 3 million Washington residents will likely experience clinically significant behavioral health symptoms in the next 3 to 6 months. This is the time where professional and community supports are needed the most. It is also compounded by our approaching winter with Washington's already high rates of Seasonal Affective Disorder. Many of us are also prepping for a second larger wave of COVID-19 infections. Other factors impacting mental health are continued social isolation, unknown economic restrictions, and the stress trying to navigate work and childcare.

With all that we are facing WMHCA wants to make sure our members are prepared to take care of themselves and are also prepared to take care of their clients, especially the ones who might be experiencing increased behavioral health symptoms including depression and thoughts of suicide. Taking care of yourself is extremely important as we navigate these challenging times. There are some resources below for therapists. WMHCA is also currently developing some webinars on self-care. In addition we will be holding a Suicide Assessment, Management, and Treatment Workshop this winter (the exact date is still to be determined).

As providers we need to use consistent language models. The LEARN model has been adopted by many organizations including the Department of Health and can be used as a foundation for suicide prevention.

**L**earn to recognize the warning signs.

**E**mpathize with the person you're concerned about and listen to what they say.

**A**sk them if they are thinking about suicide. It's okay to ask someone directly.

And if they say yes, they are, **r**emove the danger – the method they're thinking of using.

Help them with **n**ext steps, such as calling or texting a crisis line.

Please reach out to WMHCA if there is anything we can help support you with.

Take care,  
The WMHCA Team

## Resources

[Supportive Practices for Mental Health Professionals During Pandemic-Related Social Distancing](#)

[Suicide Prevention Month Communication Toolkit](#)

[Free Suicide Care Webinar through the Bree Collaborative](#)

[Free courses at the Suicide Prevention Website](#) and [Treating Suicidal Patients During COVID-19](#)

[Suicide Prevention Resources and webinars through MHTTC](#)

[Low cost 6 part series for working with children](#)

[Behavioral Health Resources and Recommendations Department of Health](#)

[Psychological First Aid](#)

[Forefront Suicide Prevention](#)

[Spread the facts campaign](#)

[Behavioral Health Toolbox For Families](#)

