

PREVENTION from page 1A

factors and recommendations for suicide from the Oregon Health Authority that spans 2000 to 2016 in Lane County. For cities with more than 5,000 residents, Florence, Cottage Grove and Junction City all had more than twice the rate of suicide compared to Lane County as a whole, according to the study published in 2018.

"The report is something that we've needed for a long time," said Roger Brubaker, Suicide Prevention Coordinator for Lane County Public Health.

This report is the first analysis of suicide in Lane County.

"We know that the vast majority of people that die by suicide are either middle-aged or older adults. In Lane County as a whole, we are a little bit older than the rest of the nation and particularly in Florence," Brubaker said. "So, a lot of people point to Florence sometimes and say, 'This is because there's more people there who are more likely to die.' What this analysis demonstrates is that is part of the story, but not the whole story. The suicide rate is higher not just because of age, but because of everything else essentially."

Suicide risk increases as people age, specifically with men. Men are nearly four times as likely to die by suicide than women, according to the report. Interpersonal obstacles and life stressors contribute to suicide in Lane County as well. These include triggers such as the death of a spouse or family member, divorce and over 35 percent of suicides in Lane County during the research period were experiencing financial hardships; one in four were suffering from physical health problems. In addition, one in four deaths by suicides in Lane County was a veteran.

Mental illness and substance abuse are among known risk factors for suicide. About half of those who died by suicide in Lane County were diagnosed or demonstrated symptoms of a mental illness or substance abuse disorder, such as depression, anxiety or bipolar disorder.

"Then there's this whole other part that has to do with suicide, and that's lethal means restrictions. So, we know that often, people who die by suicide — their transition from thought to action can often be quite brief. Around 50 percent of people are in that 10-minute to one-day range of deciding," Brubaker said. "If we are able to work with people collaboratively to create environments around them and include their families and themselves in order to limit lethal means — particularly firearms as they are the most lethal — from their environments, then we can actually save lives."

According to the report, the majority of those who died by suicide in Lane County (57 percent) used a firearm. The most common means of suicide for women was poisoning, specifically with prescription drugs. Brubaker said this is why limiting access to these lethal means is critical to saving lives of those suffering from suicidal thoughts.

"We may not have addressed the underlying distress or illness that they're experiencing, but now we have time to do so," Brubaker said. "It's making sure that those at risk don't have those things in their environments so that we can keep them safe and help them when they're ready."

And those suffering from suicidal thoughts are in fact suffering. After a life is lost to suicide, loved ones often ask why it happened, which Brubaker attributes to a lack

of understanding for what those who are suffering are going through.

"The main thing that people often get confused about on suicide is that the people who die by suicide — their real motivation for that act is oftentimes because they're in excruciating pain, physically or mentally," Brubaker said. "I think that people get a little lost on this whole concept of 'people who want to die.' I've never met anyone who wants to die. What they want to do, if they're at risk of suicide, is to escape that pain. This is important to emphasize because then people can connect with that. People can say 'Oh, I've felt pain too. But what this person is going through must be so intolerable that it would lead them to thinking these thoughts.' We've all been in pain, so think about that in relatable terms."

Mental health and physical health should be seen as synonymous in terms of taking preventative measures to manage both, the report emphasized.

"I think we all feel it acceptable that we would go to our primary care physician for a checkup, but I don't think a lot of people, during those checkups, would feel as comfortable or even consider talking about their mental health, or to even check in with themselves about their own mental wellbeing," Brubaker said. "With the 'Mind Your Mind' campaign, it's about promoting strategies that get people to think about their mental health similarly as they would their physical health."

The Mind Your Mind project is part of the Lane County Public Health Prevention Program, which aims to create and promote optimal social environments for community health and well-being. The Mind Your Mind campaign is centered on increasing awareness of the

importance of mental wellness, reducing stigma and providing practical resources that communities can use to promote mental health, according to their website. For more information on the resources they offer, visit m-yourmindproject.org.

Here in Florence, resources that exist for those suffering include local counselors, therapists and PeaceHealth Counseling Services at PeaceHealth Peace Harbor Medical Center. Currently, Health and Human Services of Lane County is working with the City of Florence to implement a mobile mental health crisis intervention team that will serve Florence and other rural areas in Lane County. The SVFR/WLAD Community Support Team is currently being trained to provide these mental health crisis services.

Lori Severance is the Community Support Team (CST)

Coordinator. CST is a program of Siuslaw Valley Fire & Rescue (SVFR) and Western Lane Ambulance District (WLAD).

"We are trained in mental health issues, grief counseling, crisis intervention and disaster response. We have widened our ability to respond to different calls," Said Severance.

SVFR will be hosting a training on Oct. 15, 16 and 17 that focuses on individual crisis intervention and group crisis intervention. It will be a three-day training at the SVFR main station, 2625 Highway 101 in Florence, and is free of charge.

"This training is available to anyone in the Florence area whose job involves crisis intervention, such as counselors, mental health professionals, law enforcement, ambulance and fire personnel or people who work with the mentally ill," Severance

said. "This training would be helpful to anyone who uses crisis intervention skills in their work."

The point of the CST team is to provide immediate services for those in need. It currently responds to house fires and medical emergencies such as sudden death situations. Upon the start of the new mobile mental health crisis program, CST "will go out on mental health crisis calls with police or ambulance, provide needed services on scene there and lower the number of people that end up in the ER because of lack of services," Severance said.

Severance also holds a Suicide Survivor Support group for individuals who have lost someone to suicide. The group meets Mondays from 5:30 to 7 p.m. at SVFR main station on Highway 101.

See PREVENTION page 9A

LABOR DAY 2019

Monday, September 2, 2019

One of the things that makes this a great country to live in, is our dedicated work force. This Labor Day, it's with pride and pleasure that we salute the working men and women who help keep our nation strong, improving the quality of life for all of us. Keep up the good work!

Enjoy your holiday and stay safe.



This message brought to you by these sponsors:

ALOHA PET GROOMING
FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
RIVER CITIES TAXI
SIUSLAW SCHOOL DISTRICT
ALLSTATE INSURANCE / BOB GARCIA
SIUSLAW VALLEY FIRE & RESCUE
WESTERN LANE AMBUANCE
FLORENCE PHARMACY
FLORENCE POLICE DEPARTMENT
LES SCWAB TIRES
JACK MOBLEY CONSTRUCTION
NW LAND SURVEYOR
KELLER WILLIAMS / DARCI CLARK
MICHAEL ROE CONSTRUCTION



Florence Food Share provides food to those who are hungry in our community. If you have four hours a week available, we are in need of volunteers to staff our Front Desk and also act as Guides as clients walk through the pantry. Please call our volunteer coordinator, Sarah Lovejoy, @ 541-997-9110 (Monday - Friday, before noon) to learn more about volunteering. info@florencefoodshare.org 2190 Spruce Street.



Florence Habitat for Humanity®

Construction Volunteers needed for each stage of the building process. Experience is a plus, but not required. Help us build a new home For information call 541-902-9227

Florence Senior Center Needs VOLUNTEERS



For Kitchen Helpers
 Tues. & Thur. 10:30 am to 12:20 pm
A fun way to meet new people and help assist the Florence area seniors.
 Please inquire at the
Florence Senior Center
 1570 Kingwood St. • 541-997-8844
Florenceseniorcenter.org

Assisting those in need in our Community.

Free Hot Meals Mon-Wed-Fri
12:00 PM - 1:30 PM

HELPING HANDS COALITION

New Location: Community Baptist Church
 4590 Hwy. 101, Florence (Across from Fred Meyer)
 Call 541-997-5057 to Volunteer



relies heavily on volunteers.

There are many opportunities to volunteer and a variety of skills and talents are always in need.

Volunteer interest forms may be found online, at the shelter and at our Thrift Shop on Bay Street.

www.oregoncoasthumanesociety.org/volunteer/

Memory Care Respite of Florence

Your Memory Care Respite Center needs you! Seeking volunteers for our Coffee Club: Conversation & companionship in a caring setting while providing respite for caregivers. Contact us at memcarerespite@gmail.com



Volunteer

Get involved

Donate

Do your part and volunteer today to help support these local non-profit organizations in our community!



Join the Peace Harbor Hospital

Volunteers.

You will find an area of interest in a caring organization.

Peace Harbor Volunteers

400 9th Street, Florence, OR 97439
 541-997-8412 ext. 2218



SENIOR MEALS PROGRAM

Offering Café 60 & Meals On Wheels

Meals on Wheels are available to people over the age of 60 who cannot get out much due to illness or advanced age and who are not eating properly, regardless of income. Café 60 is available for those who prefer to make new friends in a dining room setting.

1570 Kingwood • PO Box 2313, Florence

541-997-5673

laneseniormeals.org

Operating Monday, Wednesday and Friday

Senior Services Advisory

Council Needs New Members

Are you a senior? Have a passion for working with seniors? If yes, please consider applying for the Senior & Disability Services (S&DS) Senior Services Advisory Council. S&DS serves all of Lane County with a wide range of publicly funded services for older adults and persons with disabilities. The council advises S&DS on services and advocates on senior topics. Contact us at: sdsadvisorycouncil@lcog.org or download an application from: <http://www.lcog.org/827/SSAC-Council-Membership> Application deadline: April 26, 2019.



Saving men one PSA test at a time.
 541-997-6626

maribob@oregonfast.net

Someone to talk to... who understands!