from A1 **SUICIDES**

have, in South Lane County, a lower income rate... some of these factors that identify folks as being at a higher risk are likely a part of what has brought our numbers up but there's no 'why' and that's the survivor question, it's exactly it," said Valeria Clarke. Clarke is on the Lane County Suicide Prevention Steering Committee and is a counselor at South Lane Mental Health.

The report identifies financial shortfalls and family issues as top reasons for suicide and notes that specific groups, like veterans, have a higher rate of suicide. Sixty percent of men, according to the report, never sought out mental health treatment prior to committing suicide.

"He was a big believer in that you can fix yourself," Layla Munk said of her husband Brett, who passed away from a self-inflicted gunshot wound in February. The Munks had been active in the community, owning a local business and participating in the chamber of commerce. According to Munk, her husband had lived with some depression after they closed the doors to their business but on the morning of his suicide, had been on the phone to his father and posted a selfie on Facebook.

"He'd been drinking that morning," she said. "I thought he was going to the store, it was less than

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30 minutes from the time we were talking to when he went out into the garage and shot himself."

"A lot of times, suicide is an impulsive act," Clarke said. And while the report includes resources for those thinking of suicide focused around having conversations about their thoughts, Munk

said that, as a survivor, that narrative can sting.

"We were talking," she said. "If I had talked him out of it that morning, he could have done it another time."

But according Clarke, it's not always just about a conversation—who people are having the conversation with can often make the difference.

"Sometimes the conversation can't be with the people you're having a hard time with and that's where we come in and that's why we have suicide hotlines, the texting line, those types of resources there's a suicide prevention where you can email," she said. "Those things exist because sometimes relieving that tension of do I really want to follow through with this requires a really non-bias conversation even if it's just another person on the other end of the phone."

Of the 1,079 people who committed suicide in Lane County over the last 16 years, nearly 90 percent of them were 25-years-old or older and men were four times as likely to die by suicide than women. Outside of the jarring statistic that

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placed Lane County's rate at 50 percent higher than the national average, the remainder of the report follows common trends: men are more likely to use a firearm and women are more likely to use poison; more than 25 percent of individuals had a pre-exist-

shoved the book in front of us and said, 'Oh you were in Vietnam, look, he just published this book of photographs."

The man took the book. He sat in the booth with his wife. Marc and his friend found a table of their own. "We're talking and I look

to collect data on" she said. "The information they're collecting is factual and to have someone else (left behind) tell you they were transgender or they were gay, there's no way to know in any accurate way so they choose not to because it would be under reported."

Munk has moved away from Cottage Grove. She's active in the moveto educate ment people about suicide, participating in walks and social media groups for widows and widowers of suicide. "There were definitely signs that I either kind of poo-

pooed or ignored and then the way that he did it was really random and out of the blue," she said of her husband's suicide.

"There are other people who spend a lot of time in therapy," Clarke said, "talk about it a lot and then go ahead and do it anyway because that's what they've chosen for their lives, and their deaths for that matter.

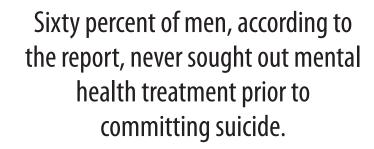
Researchers want you to think we can clomp it together and we can figure it out but we're talking about the psyche, talking about

mental health we are so unique you and me have such unique makeups, we can join over things and yet there's so much about you I would have no experience of and vice versa and I think it's a really hard place to find the why. That's why having all of these resources where people can have different conversations is one of the best things we can do."

If you or someone you know needs to have a conversation or is experiencing suicidal thoughts, help is available: The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK (8255). White Bird Clinic 24/7 hotline 541-687-4000. Crisis Text Line text 'HOME' to 741741. South Lane Mental Health 541-942-3939.

"Effective suicide prevention requires the involvement of the entire community," said Lane County Public Health Suicide Prevention & Mental Health Promotion Coordinator Roger Brubaker. "This report serves as the first critical step in making a difference: awareness."

To view the full report, visit lanecounty.org.



ing issue with alcohol; one in four deaths occurred among veterans.

Marc Waszkiewicz is a veteran. He completed his tours in Vietnam, documenting his experiences that he's since turned into a photo book and documentary aimed at preventing veteran suicide. The idea came to him, he told *The* Sentinel previously, when he was showing a friend his photo book in a restaurant and a man, wearing a Marine's hat, saw them.

"That's when my friend

her seat and on his side of the booth. She's petting his head and he's turning pages and pointing and pointing. And she has tears running down her face. They were talking. That's healing. That's healing happening, Marc said.

back and his wife is out of

The LGTBQ community, an additional special population identified by the report, was not analyzed and according to Clarke, it's due to accuracy.

"The LGBTQ community is very difficult community







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was born in Eugene and grew up in Cottage Grove, graduating from CGHS in 1968 -- go Lions! I studied radio at Lane Community College in the 1970s, graduating with a degree in both radio

proadcasting and television design. I subsequently moved my studies to the University of Oregon, graduating with a B.S. in Communications. I worked my way through school, first in the plywood plant at the Cottage Grove Weyerhaeuser mill, and later while working in radio. I took classes as I could afford them. It was a slow process. I graduated from the UO at the ripe old age of 39. While working at the mill,

had the good fortune to meet Don Work who had a popular Saturday Oldies request show on KNND. He asked me to help him pull records for his show. That experience hooked me on radio and I changed my LCC major from Business to Radio Broadcasting and began interning at KNND in late-1971. In six months, I joined the KNND team as a full-time employee working 36 hours a week on the air and other assignments (that's code for cleaning the bathroom and hauling out trash!). I eventually worked in all capacities: air talent, production, music director, program director. By 1973, I was also working at KEED in Eugene on the weekends. I don't recall having a day off from radio for a couple of years. I left KNND in 1976 and worked my way into a full-time position at Keed where I had a terrific run on the air and as music director. While I was still at KNND, I assisted Keed in developing a new record library when they changed their music format from Top-40 to County. In return, KNND received all their old Top-40 record library! Old-timers will remember"K-double-E-D"! What a great radio station. Much of what I learned at Keed helped me as the KNND music director, program director, and mid-day air talent. And I was ecstatic to be able to add all the Keed oldies from the 1950s and '60s to our increasingly popular music rotation! It is that music that I play exclusively today: the music of the '50s and '60s, "the greatest musical era", right here on KNND on Mondays from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. I hope you'll join me.



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