



I'm All Ears

Suicide Awareness

Issue Number 02-2

Spring 2002

*Upcoming Events at
The Listening Ear*

- **Orientations
June 17-22,
2002**
- **Bob's 5K Run
& Walk June
23, 2002**
- **New Volunteer
Training July
11-21, 2002**

Call 337-1728
for more infor-
mation about
any of the above
events!



"There's just no point." How many times have you heard or thought this phrase? We say or think that almost every day. "There's just no point to cleaning my room-it will just get dirty again," or "Why study? I'm going to fail no matter how hard I try." Everybody has self-defeating thoughts, but how many of us think that there is just no point to living?

According to the American Association of Suicidology (AAS), in 1999 there were over 29,000 suicides in the United States. That equals out to about 80 suicides every day. Losing 80 people to suicide every day is overwhelming, but what is even more overwhelming is the estimate that there are approximately 730,000 suicide attempts in the United States yearly. The idea that there is no point to life must not be so uncommon.

Do not think that suicide does not or cannot affect you. If you are one of the few people who have never even thought about committing suicide, chances are you know somebody who has been deeply affected by suicide. A survivor of suicide is a family member or close friend of someone who has died by suicide. It is estimated that for every suicide, there are 6 survivors, so in 1999 there were approximately 174,000 survivors of suicide. And the number continues to build because once you are a survivor, you are always a survivor.

Suicide ranks higher than homicide as causes of death in the U.S. (11th for suicide, 14th for homicide), yet it seems like homicide is more openly talked about. We have police agencies, neighborhood watches, and gun buy-back programs to help combat homicide. What do we have to help prevent suicide? There numerous agencies out there to help people who are suicidal, such as Community of Mental Health (CMH) and local crisis centers such as The Listening Ear, but it takes more than just one person to prevent their suicide. It takes you—the family members, the friends, the coworkers to help prevent suicide.

The first thing you can do to help prevent suicide is to know the warning signs of suicide. The following are signs of suicide; people who are contemplating suicide usually exhibit 2 or more of these signs:

- Talking or joking about suicide.

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*Volunteer
Crisis
Counselors
answered
nearly
10,000 calls
in 2001*

Training: An Experience

I came to The Listening Ear because I had community service hours to fulfill and didn't want to be one of those guys on the side of the road in an orange vest, picking up trash. I was skeptical at first. These people are telling me that if I go through with training, it will change my life? That this is the best free training I'll ever receive? Training is one of (if not *the*) hardest things they have ever gone through? Little did I know, they were all absolutely correct.

The Listening Ear training program is 65 hours of em-

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The Birds and the Bees

I remember taking sex education in school. It was a two-week section of our health class. We learned the mechanics of the male and female bodies. We learned about birth control, and we learned about pregnancy. The teacher told us how our bodies would change and develop over time.

Not once did she mention the word rape. Sexuality was nothing more than mechanics, and sex ed. was a crash course in engineering.

Half of all rapes occur before the age of eighteen. Many are committed by men who never realize that what they did was a crime. Even after being put on trial and locked away, convicted rapists often argue that it wasn't rape, that it was just sex. Likewise, many people who have been raped don't realize that what was done to them is a crime.

Children know more about sex than we want to admit. By the time I stepped into that classroom for day one of sex education, I already knew how the plumbing worked. I had seen the magazines, I had heard the jokes, and I had figured out the difference between a girl and a boy.

During those two weeks, our teacher never talked about things like "consent" or "respect". Should we even be surprised that one in three women are raped in their lifetimes?

Rape is a frightening topic, but there are ways to talk about it with children. Movies might be a good place to start. In Disney's "Tarzan", Jane hits Tarzan when he tries to peek beneath her dress. After the movie, talk to your kids about what Tarzan did. He didn't mean to hurt Jane - he had never seen a dress before, or a woman for that matter. But it still wasn't okay. Explain how nobody has the right to touch another person without their approval.

When people kiss on TV, ask your child whether or not both parties had consented to the kiss. How can you tell? Did they really consent, or did one character simply assume it was okay? You might be surprised at the number of non-consensual encounters on prime-time television.

Don't be afraid to talk about real-life examples of rape, either. Kids may hear about rape on the news, read about it in the paper, or talk about it at school. Glancing at the State Journal a few days ago, I found an article about a substitute teacher who had been fired for inappropriately touching a student. Don't hide these stories from your kids - talk about them. Discuss their fears, and remind them that nobody has the right to touch them sexually against their will, even if it's a teacher, a friend, or a relative.

Remind your children that it's always okay for them to talk to you if something is wrong. In addition, the older they get, the more likely they are to know someone who has been raped. Give them space to talk about this, if they want.

Finally, when children learn about the birds and the bees, make sure they learn about more than the mechanics.

Coupon for Caring

Please return to: The Listening Ear, 1017 E Grand River Ave, East Lansing MI 48823

It is only through
the financial
support of people
like you that the
Listening Ear is
able to provide
help to thousands
of people each
year.

I would like to support The Listening Ear with
a gift in the amount of :

Name: _____

\$25 \$50 \$75

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

\$100 Other

Phone # _____

Check

Credit Card

(One time charge__ or

Charge me monthly__)

Credit Card Number: _____

Exp. Date _____ VISA/MC

Signature: _____

Thank you
for your
support!

The Listening Ear

24 hour Crisis Intervention Center



- ☆ Make A Real Difference By Helping Others
- ☆ Learn Effective Communication Skills
- ☆ Be Part Of A Grassroots Organization That Has Been Helping The Greater Lansing Community For Over 30 Years

Volunteer Now!

Learn How You Can Become A Part Of The Listening Ear Staff!

New Volunteer Orientations: Attend One

Mon. June 17, 7-9:30pm, Room C101 Wells Hall, MSU

Wed. June 19, 7-9:30pm, Room E, Sparrow Professional Bldg.

Thurs. June 20, 7-9:30pm, Room C101 Wells Hall

Sat. June 22, 3-5:30pm, Room C101 Wells Hall

Call 337-1717 For More Information!

5th Annual Bob's 5K Run/Walk

June 23, 2002

8:00AM

Corner of Division & Albert
Downtown East Lansing

See **Enclosed Registration
Form**

*Over 30,000
people committed
suicide in the
United States in
1998. Over 900
of those suicides
happened here in
Michigan.
Source: 2000
National Vital
Statistics Report*

*The
Listening
Ear would
like to
thank the
thousands
of volunteers
who have
dedicated
their time
and energy
to our cause
over the past
32 years.*

Thank You to the sponsors of Bob's Run 2002!

7-11—Grove Street ■ Alliance Obstetrics & Gynecology ■ APCapital ■ Barnes & Noble ■ Chesters Nuts ■ City of East Lansing ■ Marilyn Viera, D.O. ■ Dr. George Meluch, D.C. ■ Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., Lansing Alumnae Chapter ■ Evergreen Grill ■ Classic Wines ■ East Lansing Food Co-Op ■ Foster, Swift, Collins, & Smith, P.C. ■ Grand River Counseling Center ■ Foods for Living ■ Helen Schneiderman and Daniel Vivian ■ Ingham Regional Medical Center ■ Jackson National Life ■ Kilwin's Chocolates and Ice Cream ■ Kroger-Saginaw Highway ■ Law Office of Julie H Reincke ■ MSU Federal Credit Union ■ Mary C. Fairgrieve, A.C.S.W. ■ Michigan Athletic Club ■ Two Men and A Truck ■ Mary Ann Olsen, Certified Financial Planner ■ Prudential Securities ■ Fifth Third Bank ■ Okemos Optometry, P.C. ■ Meridian Screen Printing & Design ■ Saper Galleries ■ Meriden Health & Wellness Center ■ Michigan Pain Management Specialists ■ Nena O. Bondarenko, Realtor ■ Okemos Osteopathic Center ■ Pacesetter Mortgage Company ■ Rehmann Robson, CPS's & Consultants ■ Richard Coelho, Ph. D ■ Spotted Dog Café ■ Starbucks Coffee ■ MSU School of Social Work ■ The State News ■ Warmel's & Comstock, PLLC ■ Knaggs, Harter, Brake, & Schneider, P.C. ■ DeWitt Pharmacy ■ Aventis Pharmaceuticals

Wish List for The Ear

- Office Supplies
 - Volunteers
 - Automatic Letter Folder
 - Art—posters and pictures
 - Couches
 - Binding Machine
 - Laminator
 - Filing Cabinets
 - Conference Tables
 - Desks
 - Laptop Computer
- Items need to be in good condition. We are a 501(c)3 agency. Any and all donations are tax-deductible as allowed by law. Receipts are willingly provided. To make a donation, please contact our Office Manager, Sean, at 337-1728.

Interested in supporting “I’m All Ears”?

Your small advertisement could do just that! Contact the Listening Ear’s business office at (517)337-1728 for information regarding sponsorship and advertising. You can reach out to the community, over 1, 500 Listening Ear supporters and enable the Ear to continue reaching out as well.

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- Statements of being reunited with someone who is deceased.
- Statements about hopelessness, helplessness, or worthlessness. “Life is useless,” “I wish I could just disappear.”
- Suddenly becoming happier or calmer.
- Loss of interest in things one cares about.
- Unusual visiting or calling people one cares about—saying good-byes.
- Giving possessions away, making arrangements, or setting one’s affairs in order.
- Self-destructive behavior (alcohol/drug abuse, self-injury or mutilation, promiscuity).
- Risk-taking behavior (reckless driving/excessive speeding, carelessness around bridges, cliffs or balconies, walking out in front of traffic).
- Having several accidents resulting in injury, close calls or brushes with death.
- Obsession with guns or knives.

If you see someone exhibiting 2 or more warning signs of suicide, it is important to know what to do.

- **It’s ok to ask the person about suicide, “Do you ever feel so badly that you think of suicide?”** Asking someone about suicide will not plant the idea in their head. Suicidal thoughts are common with depressive illnesses, although not all people have them. By asking someone if they are feeling suicidal, it shows that you are willing to talk and that you truly care about the person.
- **If you get a ‘yes’ to your question, ask them further. Ask, “Do you have a plan?” “Do you know when you would do it?”** Asking these questions will give you an idea if the person is in immediate danger. If you feel that they are in immediate danger do **NOT** leave that person alone! Always take plans for suicide seriously. Something you can do is calling your local emergency number or crisis intervention center.
- **Plans for suicide are serious. Never call a person’s bluff or try to minimize their problems by telling them that they have everything to live for or how hurt their family would be.** This will only increase feelings of guilt and hopelessness. The person needs to be informed that there is help available if they want it.
- **If you feel the person isn’t in immediate danger, you can offer to help them with what they are going through.** Follow through on offers to help. You can help by finding a doctor or mental health professional. You can accompany the person to these appointments. Someone who is suicidal will need support in getting help.

By being willing to talk about suicide and depression, you can help prevent suicide.

This article was written using materials from the American Association of Suicidology and SAVE.



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pathy training. Sounds easy, right? Not a chance. To put this into perspective, training is like taking a one-semester, four-credit class in nine days. Ears are trained to communicate effectively with people on an emotional level. To do this, we must first be in touch with our own emotions. It truly amazed me how much I did not know about myself. Ears are trained to help others, but it is also about growing as an individual. Because of training, I feel more in touch with myself than ever before, which allows me to better communicate with others. I am connected with thousands of past, present and future Listening Ears. I am better able to set and enforce boundaries, and feel confident in my ability to handle almost any situation. I also know that for those times when I cannot handle the situation, or things just get too crazy for me, I’ve got a multitude of people willing to truly listen and support me through my tough times. The Listening Ear training program is an unforgettable experience that I would recommend to anyone.

by a Volunteer Crisis Counselor



The Listening Ear
1017 East Grand River Ave
East Lansing, MI 48823

Crisis Line: 517-337-1717
Business Line: 517-337-1728
E-mail: theear@msu.edu

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We're on the Web!
www.thelisteningear.net

“SOMETIMES THE MOST IMPORTANT THINGS ARE THE HARDEST TO SAY. SOMETIMES IT HURTS TOO MUCH NOT TO TALK. THAT’S THE WORST, WHEN THE SECRET STAYS LOCKED UP FOR WANT OF AN UNDERSTANDING EAR.”

–LISTENING EAR STAFF MEMBER

Board Members

Community Members

- Amy Cairns (Chair)
- Louise Forsythe (Treasurer)
- Lou Hekhuis
- Cynthia Alderson

Staff Members

- Alyssa Baumann
- Amy Burandt

Staff:

- Sean Kennedy (Office Manager)
- Over 60 volunteer crisis counselors.

If you are interested in joining The Listening Ear, Please call (517)337-1717!

The Listening Ear Crisis Intervention Center extends our thanks to the community, individuals, and businesses that allow us to continue to serve as a helpful, supportive presence to those in need.