



Georgia Department of Behavioral Health & Developmental Disabilities

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DBHDD Suicide Prevention Program

Suicide is becoming a growing epidemic. In 2012, suicide surpassed car accidents as the leading cause of injury-related deaths in the United States. According to CDC data, the number of suicides in Georgia rose more than 15 percent between 2008 and 2010. In 2010, approximately 1,133 Georgians died by suicide and the number is expected to grow in 2011, 2012, and 2013. In 2010, Georgia ranked tenth in the number of suicide deaths in the United States. Below are frequently asked questions about suicide prevention programs.

FAQs:

Who do suicides affect? There are suicides in every age group from youth to elders. In the Georgia Student Health Survey 2011-2012, in grades 9 through 12 about 10 percent of youth reported seriously considering suicide in the last year and 5 percent reported attempting suicide in the last year. Furthermore, more than 25 percent of students in those grades said they did not know an adult at school they could talk to if they needed help.

What has been done to provide assistance for people who are considering suicide? Since 2006, when the legislature established the Suicide Prevention Program, the Program has worked to decrease the number of suicides and suicide attempts through a combination of public health and behavioral health approaches. Across the state and within communities, the program works to:

- **Create awareness of the tragedy of suicide** and reduce the stigma surrounding suicide. *Goal:* Every county in Georgia understands the importance of preventing suicide and supporting the healing of suicide survivors and suicide attempters.
- **Prevent suicide in communities with gatekeeper training** that teaches community members to identify people showing signs and symptoms of becoming suicidal and get them to help using programs such as Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR) and Mental Health First Aid. Over 2,000 citizens have been trained as gatekeeper trainers since 2006. *Goal:* citizens in every county become gatekeeper trainers.
- **Educating mental health professionals and others working with high risk groups** to use best practices such as screening, safety planning, and monitoring those at high risk. More than 1,000 clinicians have been trained since 2006. *Goal:* All professionals are current in best practices to use screening, safety planning, monitoring and evidence-based intervention tools to work with suicidal people.
- **Responding to the needs of Georgia citizens who are affected by suicide:** suicide survivors who have a family member who has died by suicide, suicide attempters who have tried to die by suicide, and communities and schools that are experiencing suicide clusters or suicide contagion. Since 2006 the number of suicide prevention support groups has grown from 9 to 26 with more in progress. *Goal:* Every person affected by suicide can drive to a suicide prevention coalition within an hour.
- **Building suicide prevention coalitions in local communities** to sustain suicide prevention efforts. Since 2006, 11 active suicide prevention coalitions have developed across Georgia with more communities eager to begin a coalition to sustain their efforts. *Goal:* Suicide prevention coalitions in every county in Georgia.

The role of the Suicide Prevention Program is to support local communities to prevent further suicide and heal those affected by suicide.