



## AWARENESS

### BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE

Amid the COVID pandemic along with a rapid rise in unemployment – it's been widely cited by medical journals that 2020 has seen an unprecedented spike in suicide rates on a global scale.

According to a recent article published by *JAMA Psychiatry*, this is largely attributed to economic stress factors including businesses closing, loss of jobs and the cancellation of public events. In addition, the article states that "remarkable social distancing interventions", which "fundamentally reduce human contact" may have "unintended consequences" that increase the potential for suicide and as such, prevention efforts need be a public health priority.

Reported by Befrienders Worldwide, in line with updated data from the World Health Organization (WHO), it's estimated "that **each year approximately one million people die from suicide**, which represents **a global mortality rate of 16 people per 100,000** or one death every 40 seconds."

Coinciding with COVID related deaths, these statistics may be closer to **one suicide every 20 seconds** and what's more, "there are indications that for each adult who died by suicide there may have been more than 20 others attempting suicide," the article states based on new data.

#### Warning signs of suicide

Given that **September 10th is World Suicide Prevention Day**, it's critical that everyone be made aware of warning signs, so that we can help protect our loved ones and fight against this unforgivable surge in statistics.

The Mayo Clinic lists the following behaviours to look out for:

- **Talking about dying** — saying things like "I can't live like this", or "I wish I hadn't been born."
- **Changes in routine** — "including eating or sleeping patterns."
- **Social withdrawal** — preferring to be left alone.
- **Erratic "mood swings" and personality changes** — displaying emotional highs and lows.
- **Becoming "preoccupied with death, dying or violence"** — or actually getting the means to take one's life, "such as buying a gun or stockpiling pills."
- **Increased alcohol or drug use** — engaging in risky behaviours that are often out of character.
- **Giving things away or "getting things in order"** — for no logical reason.
- **Expressing final closure** — "saying goodbye to people as if they won't be seen again."

Warning signs differ from person to person, which is why it's important to be aware and take preventative action by seeking professional help, especially if you, or someone you know may be going through a particularly hard time. By reaching out or offering support, you may be able to change the course of a person's life (and your own) before it's too late.