



SERVING THE SALISH REGION

KITSAP, JEFFERSON, AND CLALLAM COUNTIES

Suicide Prevention Awareness Month

September is Suicide Awareness Month, and in the wake of several suicides in the area, it's a perfect time to reflect on how we can aid our community in combating this epidemic. According to the 2018 Washington State Health Assessment, the suicide rate in the United States increased 30% from 2000 to 2016, from 10.4 per 100,000 standard population to 13.5. The state of Washington has a higher than average suicide rate – it is the 8th leading cause of death for Washingtonians and 2nd leading cause of death for those under 25. The good news is that suicide is fully preventable, so we can change these statistics significantly. To do so, more information and better training is needed.

There are two critical steps we all can take to prevent suicide in our community. The first is being able to see if someone is in distress, depressed, or suicidal. Some major warning signs of an individual who may be suicidal:

- Talking about wanting to die or to kill themselves.
- Looking for a way to kill themselves, such as searching online or buying a gun.
- Talking about feeling hopeless or having no reason to live.
- Talking about feeling trapped or in unbearable pain.
- Talking about being a burden to others.
- Increasing their use of alcohol or drugs.
- Acting anxious or agitated; behaving recklessly.
- Sleeping too little or too much.
- Withdrawing or isolating themselves.
- Showing rage or talking about seeking revenge.
- Displaying extreme mood swings.

The second step is how we react to the situation. Ignoring or condemning the problem can exacerbate the situation.

Here are some tips about how to help a suicidal person:

- Take your loved one seriously: Some people feel that kids who say they are going to hurt or kill themselves are “just doing it for attention.” But if your child, friend, or family member confides thoughts of suicide, believe them and get help.
- Listen with empathy and provide support: A fight or breakup might not seem like a big deal, but for a young person it can feel immense. Sympathize and listen. Minimizing what your child or friend is going through can increase his or her sense of hopelessness.
- Don't keep suicide a secret: If your friend or loved one is considering suicide, don't promise to keep it a secret. Tell him or her you can help, but you need to involve other people, who can aid in the situation. Neither of you have to face this alone.

For more free information on recognizing the signs of severe depression, preventing suicide, and advocating for suicide awareness, visit the website of the National Alliance for Mental Health (nami.org), Mental Health First Aid (mentalhealthfirstaid.org), or No Stigmas (nostigmas.org).

Important Dates

Washington Community Connectors' Parents Training
Weekend – Sept. 21st-23rd

FYSPRT Monthly Meeting in Port Townsend – Sept. 24th

Helpline House's 50th Anniversary Celebration – Sept. 29th

Kitsap Strong Resiliency Summit – Oct. 5th

Salish BHO Executive Board Meeting – Oct. 19th

Clallam Mosaic Annual Gala – Oct. 20th

Check out our online calendar for more details and events
www.salishfysprt.org/calendar

Community Surveys Online

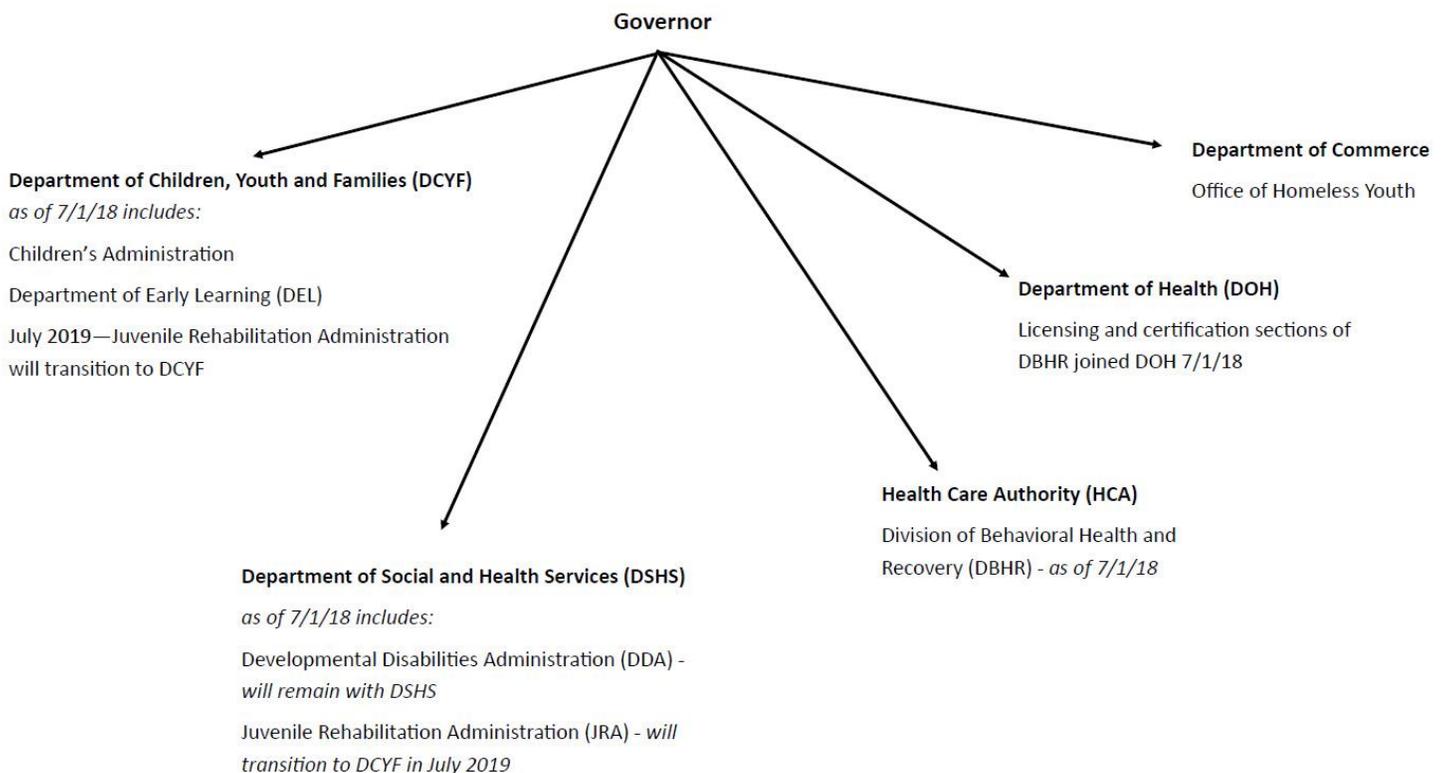
Salish FYSPRT needs community feedback to better address the needs of the community. Three surveys are now on its website, including a critical one on community priorities. The surveys take five minutes or less and will help focus FYSPRT efforts in best serving the Salish community. Links are up at salishfysprt.org/participation.

Parenting Corner: Talking to Toddlers

The medical journal *Pediatrics* has released a study on the long term cognitive and linguistic skills gained when adults talk to toddlers. Between the ages of 18-24 months, a child's brain has a "language explosion," wherein many of their linguistic skills are gained. While most obvious part of this explosion is the child's own blossoming speech, cognitive connections are also made, which become apparent later in life. The reports showed that the most noticeable gains occurred when conversations were started in response to toddler vocalization. So chat away with your little ones to help them get a jump on life.

The Changing Face of State Agencies

Several changes have been made to the structure and names of agencies that support the health and wellbeing of our youth. E-mails and phone numbers may change but will be forwarded for the time being. Here is a handy chart to see what services fall under which department.



Upcoming Salish FYSPRT Meetings

Beyond the September 24th meeting in Port Townsend focusing on the topic of suicide prevention, Salish FYSPRT meeting may change from the regular last Monday of the month date. This is to better align meetings with community events and reflect the holiday engagements of our constituents. If you have any questions or comments, please e-mail Colleen at cbradley@wapave.org. Meeting notices will be sent and posted as usual.