

TO: All Staff
FROM: Kathy Degyansky
DATE: May 29, 2019
RE: **Suicide Prevention Procedure**

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) WISQARS Leading Causes of Death Reports, in 2017:

- Suicide was the tenth leading cause of death overall in the United States, claiming the lives of over 47,000 people.
- Suicide was the second leading cause of death among individuals between the ages of 10 and 34, and the fourth leading cause of death among individuals between the ages of 35 and 54.
- There were more than twice as many suicides (47,173) in the United States as there were homicides (19,510).

Recent incidents in the Edge have led Library staff to recognize our professional responsibility to have in place a procedure for handling situations involving staff and/or patrons. The following has been prepared to advise staff.

If a patron or staff person expresses their intent to harm themselves, these comments should be taken seriously.

Should the threat be imminent; the person is extremely agitated, upset, or states their plan to take immediate action, the police emergency number (6000) should be called. Do not wait for others to corroborate your instincts. Staff should provide as much detail to the police dispatcher as possible. Public Safety has a mental health outreach unit with specifically-trained personnel to handle these situations.

If a person mentions that they have feelings of despondency, hopelessness, and can see no other way out, the person should be provided a safe space to talk. The Assistant Director's Office is one option. If the person is a minor, staff should offer to call their parents. If they are an adult, or reject the offer to talk with a parent, staff should offer to call St. Vincent's Hospital Crisis Prevention and Response Team at 914-925-5959. Experts are on duty there to make an assessment and carry out a plan of action specific to the situation.

Suicide Awareness Training is available from the Westchester County Department of Community Mental Health. Staff desiring more in-depth training should speak with their supervisor to arrange for a time to take advantage of regularly-scheduled sessions.