



THE COUNTY OF KAUA'I

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News Release

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Kaua'i police recognize National Suicide Prevention Awareness Month

LĪHU'E – The Kaua'i Police Department (KPD) recognizes September as National Suicide Prevention Awareness Month and reminds the community that help is always just a phone call away.

If you, or someone you know is thinking about suicide, please call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 800-273-TALK or text "Aloha" to 741741.

Aside from recommending that anyone in distress seek standard professional care and emotional and mental support from providers on the island, KPD also offers its own services. The department has trained Crisis Negotiators, as well as sworn and civilian personnel who make up the department's Crisis Intervention Team. The team is available at a moment's notice to help and speak with anyone going through a troubling time.

To receive aid from this specialized team, please call KPD Dispatch at 241-1711 or, if it's an immediate crisis or emergency, please call 911.

All of these services are especially critical right now, as community members may be facing higher levels of stress and anxiety due to an uncertain future during an unprecedented time unlike any other in recent history.

"Now more than ever we need to be aware of those around us who may be suffering in silence. They may be too ashamed or too afraid to ask for help, but there is hope and there is help," said Gina Kaulukukui, Domestic Violence Coordinator for KPD who is also the founder of Life's Bridges Hawai'i and the Prevent Suicide Kaua'i Task Force. "Every suicide death is one



too many and each one impacts our entire community. The majority of suicides, however, are preventable and there are plenty of resources available for assistance.”

One person dies every second day in Hawai‘i due to suicide, according to Kaulukukui, and it is the leading cause of death for people ages 10 to 34.

Last year on Kaua‘i, there were 11 deaths by suicide. This year, to-date, there have been seven. The call volume to dispatch regarding health-related cries for help has remained the same over the last few months despite ongoing effects that the COVID crisis have taken upon the community.

“While Kaua‘i has not been faced with the same level of COVID infections that other places have, that’s not to say that the pandemic hasn’t impacted people in our community whether it be through job loss or having to take care of children who are now schooling at home,” said Assistant Chief Bryson Ponce. “We want to make sure people know that there are resources available and we also want them to be vigilant of the warning signs of suicide so that they can help loved ones who may be in distress.”

Some of the signs to look out for in a person who may be contemplating suicide, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, include:

- History of substance abuse.
- Talking about feelings of hopelessness.
- Having suffered some kind of recent loss (relationship, work, etc.).
- Impulsiveness or aggressive tendencies.
- History of mental disorders, such as depression.
- For a more detailed list of risk and protective factors please visit

<https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/suicide/riskprotectivefactors.html>.

The number, again, to call for help 24/7 is 800-273-8255 (TALK) or visit

<http://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/> where you can find additional information and resources, as

well as an opportunity to chat online with one of the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline's representatives.

"Don't ever feel ashamed to ask for help," said Ponce. "Times are not easy right now but it's comforting to know that there are people available around the clock who have multiple resources that can help anyone get through a tough time and feelings of hopelessness. There is always a light at the end of the tunnel."

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