



ISLAND COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH

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PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

STATEMENT REGARDING NATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION MONTH (CORONAVIRUS)

Island County, September 21, 2020:

September is National Suicide Prevention Month. Care and concern is especially important this year due to the increased stress, anxiety and depression people may be experiencing with COVID-19. Suicide is preventable and everyone has a role to play. Island County Public Health and Human Services are asking Island County residents to **#BeThe1To** help prevent suicide.

Washington state suicide rates continue to be higher than the national average. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, more than three million Washingtonians will experience clinically significant behavioral health symptoms within the next 3 – 6 months, with depression, anxiety and stress being the most common. Substance use disorders are also significantly increasing and expected to continue to increase. Importantly, Hispanic/Latinx individuals, Black individuals, young adults, essential workers, and unpaid adult caregivers report having experienced these behavioral health symptoms and suicide ideation at disproportionate rates.

Following the LEARN Model Steps can help everyone identify the steps they can take to offer support:

- **L**earn to recognize the warning signs.
- **E**mpathize with the person you're concerned about and listen to what they say.
- **A**sk them if they are thinking about suicide. It's okay to ask someone directly.
- And if they say yes, they are, **r**emove the danger – the method they're thinking of using.
- Help them with **n**ext steps, such as calling or texting a crisis line.

If you are in crisis or having thoughts of suicide, or if someone you know is in crisis, call the **Island County Crisis Line at (800) 584-3578** or the **Suicide Prevention Lifeline at (800) 273-8255** or [chat online](#).

Additional suicide prevention resources:

- [LEARN](#)
- [Your wellbeing during COVID-19](#)
- [Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#)
- [One conversation can change a life](#)

Sources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (August 14, 2020). *Mental Health, Substance Use, and Suicidal Ideation During the COVID-19 Pandemic — United States, June 24–30, 2020*. <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6932a1.htm>. HealthLine Media. (August 23, 2020). *Suicidal Ideation Is Increasing During COVID-19: How Best to Cope*. <https://www.healthline.com/health-news/suicidal-ideation-is-increasing-during-covid-19-how-best-to-cope>. Washington State Department of Health. (August 2020). *Statewide High-Level Analysis of Forecasted Behavioral Health Impacts from COVID-19*. <https://www.hca.wa.gov/assets/program/covid-19-statewide-summary-forecast-of-bh-impacts-20200624.pdf>