

# Suicide a real concern in Wyoming

Did you know that Wyoming's per capita suicide rates have ranked among the worst in the country for the last two decades?

Adult males, over the age of 65, are the highest risk group, and Wyoming leads the nation in suicide deaths by firearms.

Our nation's youths are the fastest growing population for suicide completion with the statistics showing that one youth kills himself every 114 minutes. Suicide is a national public health problem that affects individuals of all ages, education levels and racial backgrounds.

Despite advances in the science of suicide and ongoing education and awareness efforts, suicide remains a difficult subject for many members of the general public.

The Sheridan County Suicide Prevention Coalition is made up of interested community members whose joint mission is to educate, train and support the community to respond in a compassionate manner to those who have consid-

ered suicide and others whose lives have been affected by it.

The coalition is a community response to suicide and is actively working to raise awareness on the seriousness of this issue. Suicide devastates families, friends and the community and can lead to more suicides.

The coalition has Gatekeeper training available to assist you, your business or service organization on how to respond to suicide concerns and threats. Everyone is a candidate for Gatekeeper training, because everyone can and should know how to try to save a life.

The goal of the Gatekeeper Program is to train people who may be in the best possible position to prevent suicide — you!

This one-hour training introduces par-

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## Silver Threads

Shantel Moore



ticipants to warning signs and risk factors for suicide, techniques for asking the suicide question, and a referral process to transfer a potentially suicidal person to the proper professional for treatment and counseling.

This is a free training offered by certified coalition members with the goal of educating the community in preventing suicide through proper recognition and referral. The key to prevention is recognizing the warning signs and knowing what to do to get help.

If you have lost a loved one to suicide, the first thing you should know is that you are not alone. Each year nearly 30,000 people in the United States die by suicide — the devastated families and friends they leave behind are known as

“survivors.”

The coalition has information regarding support groups available to survivors who may find it comforting to talk with others who have also suffered a suicide loss. The support group for adults is facilitated by a mental health professional and a survivor of suicide and is available to all individuals at no charge.

A youth survivor support group is also available to individuals, and Carol Lundgren, counselor at Sheridan High School, or Steve Edfors at Northern Wyoming Mental Health can provide more information.

Please call 674-7702 and speak with Anna Waser, prevention specialist, for more information and/or to schedule a training today!

*Shantel Moore is services director at the Sheridan Senior Center and a member of the Sheridan County Suicide Prevention Coalition. Silver Threads is a weekly column written by people involved with the senior center.*