Role of Forgiveness in Suicide Prevention

Suicide Risk Factors

- Age
- Gender
- Race and Ethnicity
- Demographics (Sexuality)
- Health Factors
- Personality Factors
- Sociological Factors
- Social Factors
- History of Sexual/Physical Abuse
- Psychological Disorders

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The Inter-Personal Theory

Perceived Burdensomeness

Thwarted Belonging

RESENTMENTS!!

and all its baggage

Self-Condemnation

Shame

What are the results of unforgiveness?

Physically—stress, high blood pressure, ulcers, addictions

Mentally—distracted, triggered

Emotionally—depression, anger, bitterness

Relationally—broken, distant, distrust

Spiritually—broken, less than life

What are the results of unforgiveness?
How do we deal with it?

- Isolation
- Anger
- Avoidance
- Addictions
- Secrets
- Depression

Hope
Forgiveness

Suicide Resilience Factors

Forgiving those who harmed us (Monsters)
Forgive ourselves for hating ourselves, hurting ourselves
“When we forgive, we willingly and deliberately offer goodness to those who have been unfair to us.”

Dr. Robert Enright, UW-Madison

What forgiveness is

Reducing/Replacing: resentments, anger, behaviors, thoughts with positive thoughts, feeling and behaviors toward the offender (other or self)

How do I forgive?

Acknowledging the pain and the junk

Decide my way isn’t working
How do I forgive?

Consider forgiveness
Choose to forgive
Decide to work at forgiving

Rehumanize
- Your Spiritual Foundation
- Common Humanity
- Uniqueness

Work of forgiving

Reflection
How have I grown?
How can I use what I have learned?
Compassion
What does science say forgiveness can do?

- Reduce psychological depression
- Reduce anxiety
- Reduce unhealthy anger
- Decrease posttraumatic stress symptoms

What does science say forgiveness can do?

- Increase quality of life
- Increase focus (not distracted by the thoughts and negative feelings)
- Increase cooperation and reduce bullying (deal with underlying issue)
- Increase self-esteem

What does science say forgiveness can do?

- Reduce the factors that can lead to suicide
  - Perceived Burdensomeness
  - Thwarted Belonging
Forgiving yourself

How do you talk about yourself to yourself?

You can and should honor yourself even as you are imperfect.

Offering yourself a sense that you have inherent worth.

Forgiving yourself

You are more than your actions

Admit you did wrong and need to correct wrong done to other people. Seek forgiveness.

Where to apply forgiveness?

Universal prevention—teach all children/adults how to forgive/Public Health

Intervention—lack of ability and willingness to forgive in those at risk (Self and Others)/Individual

Postvention—Self (attempted) Survivors
First—shut up!
Recognize we are leaky people
Choose the positive over the negative
Look for love, mercy and forgiveness
Practice love, mercy and forgiveness

There is more to your story

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Thank you for being here.

Go and do amazing things!