

## **Suicide is a Cry for Help**

In the United States, suicide is one of the top ten leading causes of death, ranking 8th or 9th for the last few decades. Each year, 30,000 American lives of all ages, religious, ethnic and racial backgrounds are lost to this tragedy. Another estimated 650,000 receive emergency care after suicide attempts. An estimated 200,000 persons are further affected by the loss of a loved one, friend or acquaintance by suicide. Countless other lives are impacted by issues relating to depression and mental illness at home, at work, at school or in the community.

Suicide doesn't have to happen. Attempts often represent a cry for help. The Samaritans' founder, Chad Varah, observed that many suicidal people could be helped through befriending - talking with caring, non-judgmental listeners. Working toward that belief, he opened the first branch of The Samaritans in London, England, in 1953. Today, befrienders' centers work to prevent suicide worldwide with more than 31,000 volunteers in over 40 countries.

## **The Samaritans of Rhode Island**

In 1977, the Rhode Island branch of The Samaritans, an independent, nonprofit and philanthropic organization, was incorporated in Providence. Since then, the agency has received over half a million calls and helped countless others through its other programs and services.

## **The Samaritans' Free, Confidential 24 Hour Hotline/Listening Line – The gateway to care and a lifetime of support.\***

Every day, people of all ages face difficult problems in their lives. Often, they believe no one cares or wants to listen. They can sometimes feel hopeless, alone or have suicidal thoughts.

But, you don't have to be suicidal to call The Samaritans. Our callers talk about many different personal issues. Some people call once, while others may call every day – sometimes calling to let us know how their day went or just to say goodnight. Samaritan volunteers are there to listen as often as needed.

For callers not receiving professional care and for persons calling on behalf of loved ones or seeking more information, The Samaritans can point the direction to emergency services and licensed care programs in Rhode Island.

The Samaritans' nonjudgmental listening model does not replace professional medical, mental health, social service or pastoral care. It can, however, shore up supportive services between appointments or when family and friends are not available. Hotline/listening line support is also available to callers when professional services are no longer a care option.

## **Safe Place Support Group**

Established in 1981, Safe Place remains RI's only free, bereavement support group exclusively for adults who have experienced death by suicide of a family member or friend.

Safe Place provides an atmosphere of acceptance for exploring all the feelings not understood by others, as well as an opportunity to look at the future with a little more hope.

Safe Place meets every Tuesday evening from 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. so Rhode Islanders from throughout the state can attend at least once a month or even weekly- as needed and able.

## **Youth and Teen Education**

The Samaritans, in partnership with the RI Departments of Education and Health, are mandated to provide suicide prevention education training to students, teachers, and administrators, as well as parents/caregivers.

Each year, more than 900 information packets focusing on children, youth and teens, are sent to RI licensed school professionals. These provide information on training opportunities, posters, brochures, emergency care options and follow-up treatment available through licensed facilities in the state.

In 2002, The Samaritans launched its SamariTEEN program providing opportunities for college-aged students to learn the life-long skills of befriending and suicide prevention.

Each year, the Youth and Teen Education program reaches more than 3,000 students, professionals, parents and other caregivers, teen hotline callers, and persons calling on behalf of teens.

### **Outreach and Community Education – Creating Stronger Links to Community Resources**

As a longtime, trusted community program, The Samaritans is in a unique position to increase awareness of issues relating to depression, suicide, treatment and issues facing survivors of a loved one's suicide.

Our newest tool connecting people to information, support and resources is our website launched in January 2004. The site contains in-depth information as well as links to more than 60 international, national, state and local resources.

Other Samaritan education materials include brochures, fact sheets, public service announcements, press releases and advertising, public speaking and training opportunities.

### **The Samaritans – A Community Service Opportunity of a Lifetime**

As the saying goes, “Once a Samaritan, always a Samaritan.” Since our beginning in 1977, we have trained more than 1250 volunteers in the art of befriending. The Samaritans depends on dedicated individuals, 18 years or older, to staff our 24 hour volunteer hotline/listening line.

Call us or visit our web site to learn more about this rewarding experience.

### **Other Ways You Can Help:**

- Visit our website at [www.samaritansri.org](http://www.samaritansri.org)
- Distribute our posters, pamphlets and brochures.
- Donate or host a fundraiser for The Samaritans. We depend on donations to meet our operating and program costs.
- Consider a legacy gift to The Samaritans of Rhode Island. Talk to your legal and financial advisor to discuss giving opportunities.

**Need to talk?**

**Call a friend at The Samaritans:  
(401) 272-4044 or statewide (1-800)365-4044**

The Samaritans Hotline/Listening Line is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year- depending on the availability of volunteers within a 24-hour period.

**NOTE: If someone is at immediate risk of suicide, please call 911 directly.**

## **The Samaritans, Inc.**

### **Rhode Island's Suicide Prevention Resource Center**



*Providing the gateway to care, a lifetime of support and stronger links to community resources.*

**Free and Confidential  
Crisis Hotline/Listening Line:  
(401) 272-4044 or  
RI Toll Free (1-800) 365-4044**

**For more information,  
visit our website@  
[www.samaritansri.org](http://www.samaritansri.org)**