

Be The One to Prevent Suicide

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Since the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown was initiated last Spring, the Big Bend region has experienced an alarming increase in the number of suicides – especially among teen males.

Lee's Place data reflects that the number of victims of suicide nearly tripled from between 2019 and 2020.

As therapists trained in grief, loss and trauma, we are often called after the tragedy to help the surviving family members make sense of, understand and begin to heal from their experience.

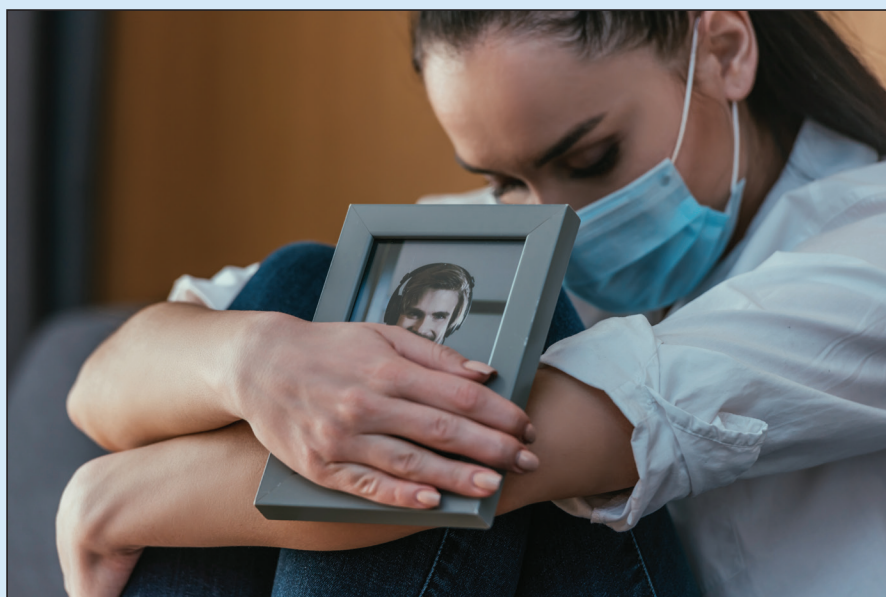
Both Tallahassee Memorial Healthcare and Capital Regional Medical Center have recently hosted community Zoom sessions on the topic of our children's mental health during the pandemic. These sessions provided important insight into the behaviors of our children, adolescents and teens that may be signs they are struggling. The sessions reinforce the ways parents and other adults in their lives play a critical role to support and advocate for them. We encourage you to check out these sessions, which we will post on our Lee's Place website at www.leesplace.org

Another step we can take is to debunk the myths about suicide.

MYTH: Talking about suicide will cause it to happen.

TRUTH: This is a faulty and dangerous belief that that can result in more isolation, loneliness and shame for those who are struggling. Saying it out loud takes away the power of the act, de-mystifies it and opens up a conversation about what the person may be experiencing around hurting themselves or ending their life. Don't be afraid to ask your child if they have thought about hurting

themselves or ending their life. Tell them you want to understand and help.



MYTH: People who threaten suicide are just looking for attention.

TRUTH: Yes, in many cases, they want and need attention - in the form of care, compassion and understanding. They need at least one person in their life who cares enough to ask them about their pain, and who can be a non-

judgmental source of compassion and understanding. They need at least one person who lets them know, "You matter. I value your life. I want to help. I see a place for you in the world."

MYTH: You can't stop people who are committed to killing themselves.

TRUTH: Most often someone who is thinking of going down the path to take their life will provide clues that they are hurting inside and may accept help if it is offered. This may come in the form of a statement testing the waters to see if someone will reach out (for example, "If I didn't show up tomorrow, I doubt anyone would notice,"); artwork or writing that depicts death; loss of interest in activities or people they used to enjoy; radical changes in their normal behavior.

Staying connected and checking in with our children means noticing these shifts and asking them if they are hurting. Avoid getting angry at them for these things, and instead see them as the child's way of communicating a kind of hurt they themselves may not understand.

DID YOU KNOW?

The National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention and the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline recommend **just 5 simple steps** to intervene to save the life of someone who may be considering suicide to end their suffering. Its national campaign, **#BeThe1To** is committed to spreading the word about actions we can all take to prevent suicide.

ASK how your children are doing. Then, listen to the answer. This means face to face interaction, without distractions. If your child is struggling, talk to them about what they are experiencing and what might help them.

BE THERE. As parents, teachers, school personnel, friends, relatives. This increases social connectedness, which is a basic human need for survival. Especially during this pandemic, when our social interactions are so limited, being there is even more important.

KEEP THEM SAFE. If you have seen red flags that they may be considering suicide, it is **CRITICAL** to eliminate access in the home to potential sources, such as weapons or medications. Work together on a safety plan for them that includes, at a minimum, coping skills they will use first, reasons they want to live, someone they can call if they have those thoughts or feelings.

HELP THEM CONNECT. Ask them if they want to talk to someone who can help them through this. Maybe it's a coach or family friend or other trusted adult. Seek a licensed therapist to work with them locally, or request an emergency evaluation from the local behavior health centers at TMH or CRMC if they are in crisis. Call the National Suicide **Prevention Lifeline at 800-273-8255.**

FOLLOW UP. Check in on them consistently. This creates connectedness that reminds them someone cares about them and wants them around.

Let's commit to saving lives in 2021 by reaching out to those who are hurting on the inside.

For more information, check www.bethe1to.com/bethe1to-steps-evidence/

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 800-273-8255

Thanks to our donors and grantors Lee's Place provides over 300 clients each year with loss and trauma therapy.

We often are helping all members of a family.

We serve all ages, beginning as young as 4, for all types of loss and trauma. Loss and trauma can include: adoption, incarceration, foster children, in addition to crime, death, suicide, abuse Education to the community is part of our mission:

- We work with businesses when a staff person has had a tragedy. Their experience can have a ripple effect through a business.
- We speak at professional organizations and businesses on how to be ready when a tragedy occurs, and how to best help your staff or members

Lee's Place is named for our president and founder's son, Lee Rabalais. Many of our donors and board members knew Lee and continuing his legacy means the world to them, and to all of us.



"Like us" on Facebook and stay up to date on events and happenings at Lee's Place.

www.facebook.com/LeesPlaceTallahassee

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Lee's Place Mission Statement:

To provide quality therapy to adults, children, and families, regardless of their financial circumstances, who are coping with loss, trauma, and life changing experiences, while offering specialized training and education to the community.




THANK YOU...

We are incredibly grateful to our donors for your generosity in 2020. During an unprecedented year of stress, fear, financial instability and suicides your generous gifts assisted Lee's Place in the ability to serve so many in great peril. Thank you from the staff, board, and clients! You are changing lives for the better.

Aquafeatures – Buz Ireland is a true hero to us as he maintains, cleans, and beautifies the pond in the Lee's Place Memory Gardens. Thank you Buz!

Harvest Printing for their help in printing and mailing our Annual Fund letters

Inkpot of Tallahassee for creating beautiful newsletters 

Our outgoing Board chair: **Kristen Whitaker**. She has been a bright light who has served for 3 years on our board of directors. She will be missed at our monthly meetings, but she will always stay involved. Kristen knew Lee in school and holds a special place in her heart for him and for the work we do in his memory.

Other board members who leave us in the first quarter of 2021 – thank you for your service:

Danielle Kosberg – treasurer

Carin Butler – secretary

Welcome new board member – **Jonathan Rees**. Jon chaired our 2020 Virtual Jubilee and did a phenomenal job. We are thrilled he will continue his service to Lee's Place and the community. Plus he is a lot of fun!

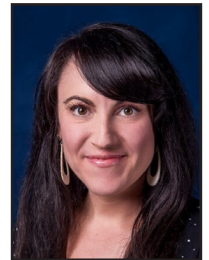
American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers Foundation for offering grants to support divorcing/separating families and those who have experienced Domestic Violence. Your foresight in recognizing the positive results from therapy following these traumas serve hundreds of families as they learn to cope and move forward in healthy ways.

The RoyOMartin Foundation for continuing to support trauma therapy in our community. Trauma has been proven to leave lifelong challenges that can include physical and mental illnesses, drug abuse, inability to cope/work/parent/school. Therapy can help victims assimilate their experiences and move forward in healthy ways.

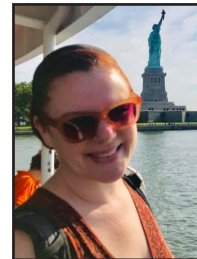
Leon County's LeonCARES for seeing the need in our community for financial assistance during the pandemic.



Kristen Whitaker



Danielle Kosberg



Carin Butler



Jonathan Rees



FEB 2021

RECOMMENDATION BY THE STATE. REGISTRATION # CH13571

A COPY OF THE OFFICIAL REGISTRATION AND FINANCIAL INFORMATION MAY BE OBTAINED FROM THE DIVISION OF CONSUMER SERVICES BY CALLING TOLL-FREE (800-435-7352) WITHIN THE STATE. REGISTRATION DOES NOT IMPLY ENDORSEMENT, APPROVAL, OR

WWW.LEESPLACE.ORG

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