

Healthy Thoughts: Chronic Suicidality

Provided by ERH Parish Health Ministry

.....
“For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” (Jeremiah 29:11)

What is chronic suicidality?

There is a little-known minority of people who spend years and even decades living with constant suicidal ideation (thoughts of suicide). Some may never reach a crisis point, while many may. People who experience chronic suicidality plan their suicides in meticulous, rational detail in order to achieve a peaceful death and minimize how much they implicate the innocent when they die. Often hours, days, and weeks are spent mulling over these details and plans.

For those who are chronically suicidal, help is difficult. Nearly all suicidality assistance is offered as crisis intervention. This makes it nearly impossible for chronically suicidal persons to discuss their feelings with a health care professional without being confined to a mental health facility, even though they may not be at risk of following through at that time.

Family, friends, acquaintances and coworkers surround many of these people, and they do not understand chronic suicidality or even imagine the concept can exist.

Chronically suicidal people deal with very vivid images of death that they often cannot control. Some people feel like it is their only option and suicide becomes their focus. Others report that these disturbing thoughts are a result of underlying chronic depression and a desire to escape life.

Most people at some point in their life have had at least a fleeting thought of how they would rather not be alive at a given moment, but for the chronically suicidal individual, the brain fixates on it. The battle of chronic suicidal ideation can be paralyzing and exhausting.

What not to say to someone who has chronic suicidality:

- Suck it up.
- Just hang on.
- It will get better.
- Your life isn't that bad.
- Things could always be worse.

How to help someone:

- Try not to be overly alarmed as they share their feelings. You want to be someone they can trust and be comfortable with.
- Reassure them that they are safe with you.
- Let them know that sharing their thoughts is okay and does not mean they will be hospitalized (unless in immediate danger).
- Encourage and help them find a professional who can treat them.

There is no cure for chronic suicidality, though medication, talk therapy and other professional services may help a person manage their symptoms. There is an abundance of support available for those not wanting to die but struggling to live.

For additional support and information, contact The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1-800-273-8255.

Source: www.speakingofsuicide.com



Episcopal Retirement Homes (ERH) is a not-for-profit organization committed to enriching the lives of older adults in a person-centered, innovative, spiritually based way. ERH serves seniors in Ohio, Kentucky and Indiana through residential communities, affordable housing and in-home services. For more information, please call (800) 835-5768 or visit www.EpiscopalRetirement.com.