

Faith.Hope.Life – The Role of our Faith Community in Suicide Prevention

Every life matters in God’s kingdom, from the youngest to the oldest, the weakest to the strongest, the infirmed to the healthy. We need to celebrate reasons to live, every day, regardless of how you feel at the moment. Let’s be honest: life can sometimes feel overwhelming. The loss of a job or a relationship, trouble in school, a serious mental or physical illness, a divorce, or the death of a loved one can happen to anyone. Life events like these can leave us feeling worthless, abandoned, or isolated.



Our Lady of Victory seeks to be a caring community focusing on the hope that in God’s time, the travails of this life will subside. Through connections within our own community, we find strength for each day. Each of us is here for a reason and has a God-given role in life, regardless of the circumstances. Moment by moment, it is important to remember there is help and hope.

Faith.Hope.Life. is a reminder that God loves you and knows your struggles and failures, as well as your joys and triumphs. Even when you walk through the valleys of the shadows, God is with you. In the times when it feels like God is far away or doesn't hear our prayers, God gives us people who can help—friends, loved ones, co-workers, others in your faith community, and clinical professionals such as counselors, therapists, and doctors. They can be God's heart and God's listening ear when we feel most troubled or alone.

If you, or someone you know has lost hope, is feeling completely alone, or that life doesn't matter, reach out for help. Let others help. This is especially important if there are thoughts of suicide or wanting to die.

Studies show that persons experiencing mental health problems or emotional distress frequently turn to faith communities and their leaders for help. As part of OLV’s faith community, you help in many ways:

♥ Know the facts

Suicide does not discriminate; it can touch people of all ages and classes; all racial, ethnic, and religious groups. However, suicide is preventable and you can play a role in your community.

♥ Talk about mental illness

Help your faith members understand mental health problems as being real and treatable in the same way that physical health problems are. Speak and pray about mental illness just as you would about physical illnesses, such as cancer, heart disease, or diabetes.

♥ Promote connectedness

Fellowship groups, choirs, service work, worship—all are ways people connect in faith communities. Such connections let people know they are not alone and that they are cared for.

♥ Narratives of hope

Share stories—from the Bible or other sacred texts—of how people have overcome adversity and experienced God’s presence in times of struggle and hardship. You can also share the stories of your own lives—your faith and courage—that can give hope and strength to others.

Resources for Help National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (24 hours): 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Pathways2Promise: Ministry and Mental Illness: <https://www.pathways2promise.org/>

Reprinted with permission from <https://theactionalliance.org/faith-hope-life>