

**September 10: World Suicide Prevention Day: 'Take a minute – change a life'**  
**Psychologists worried about trend in social media 'games' for youth encouraging risky and self-harm behaviour**

Suicide and suicidal behaviour remain one of the biggest public-health challenges of Europe and the World. Around 800.000 people die due to this cause of death yearly, which accounts for more deaths than war or terrorism.

**10 September is World Suicide Prevention Day** – an opportunity to raise awareness about this topic, to talk about it, support activities and light a candle in memory of those that passed away.

The past few decades have shown progress and in several countries there has been a slight decline in suicides. Partly, we can explain this with higher awareness of mental health, the knowledge about how and where to seek help and all the efforts to reduce the stigma associated with speaking out when in pain.

Nevertheless, there are also many challenges. 'We have seen a recent rise in the number of reports of suicide in the media', says Tony Wainwright, psychologist and member of EFPA's Board Promotion and Prevention. There has also been a worrying trend in social media "games" for youth that encourage risky and self-harm behaviour as well as reports of suicidal behaviour among celebrities. Young people in distress are among the most vulnerable groups that need our attention and irresponsible media reporting might trigger some copy-cat effects that can have very damaging results. It is our social responsibility to act to protect and prevent this kind of results.

While young people are a very high risk group for suicide and self harm, we should not forget that there is also a big problem among older people as well, where social isolation can be a serious risk.

The [International Association for Suicide Prevention](#) and national and local organizations organise many activities around the 10<sup>th</sup> September. Among these, there is the "Cycle Around the Globe" action, that encourages us to cycle for suicide prevention.

As Vita Postuvan, Slovenian member of EFPA's Board Promotion and Prevention explains: "This year's theme is **'Take a minute, change a life'** that makes it clear that suicide prevention is not a matter only for professionals, but a responsibility of every one of us. With a sincere heart we can approach a person in pain, distress or crisis and we can offer them our time, energy, commitment and help. This in turn really saves lives and we know, that helping others is a very good way to feel good yourself, so this can be good for everyone."

Also psychologists are available for those in need and there is a list of certificated psychologists here: <http://www.europsy-efpa.eu/find-a-psychologist>

Text : Vita Postuvan/Tony Wainwright - EFPA Board Promotion and Prevention

<http://efpa.eu/news/september-10world-suicide-prevention-day;take-a-minute-change-a-life-preventionintervention.efpa.eu/introduction/>  
[http://www.who.int/mental\\_health/prevention/suicide/wspd/en/](http://www.who.int/mental_health/prevention/suicide/wspd/en/)  
<https://iasp.info/wspd2017/>