GO WHERE THE COWBOYS GO
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Addressing unhealthy thoughts could save your life

Many suggest a proactive approach to mental health amid working-age suicide rate hike

By Chrissy Suttles
Wyoming Tribune Eagle

CHEYENNE – As the suicide rate among the country’s working-age population continues to rise, experts advise those struggling to identify and combat unhealthy thought patterns stop long enough to seek professional help.

The suicide rate among American workers increased 34 percent from 2000 to 2016, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The organization examined occupations of 22,053 people 16 to 64 years old who died by suicide in states participating in the National Violent Death Reporting System in 2012 and 2015.

Wyoming didn’t participate in NVDRS during those years, but the Wyoming Department of Health reports suicide rates increased from 17 deaths per 100,000 in 2004 to 24 deaths per 100,000 in 2016 in the state.

“It’s about taking control of your mental health over time,” said Bethany Orson, who volunteers with suicide prevention groups in Wyoming. “Examples of unhealthy thoughts can be overgeneralizations, where someone who is already feeling depressed experiences one failure and uses it as justification for why they are wholly unworthy. Sometimes people will personalize things completely out of their control, blaming themselves for something they really had nothing to do with.”

Orson said her first advice to those stuck in the cycle of negative
thoughts is to seek out a friend, family member or licensed professional to confide in.

“Even if you’re just feeling a little bit low, talking to someone almost always helps to alleviate the burden on yourself,” she said. “Don’t be afraid to seek help in whatever way you feel most comfortable.”

Recognizing these thoughts can sometimes be the most challenging part of the process.

Cognitive behavioral therapy is used to treat depression and anxiety for this reason. CBT focuses on the ways a person’s thoughts and behaviors are connected to help change negative patterns.

Knowing your triggers and establishing coping mechanism for emotional responses with someone can help, too.

“If there’s no one around, imagine how someone who loves you would respond to the critical thoughts,” Orson said.

Employers can also help staff members with their mental health through wellness programs, regular check-ins and reduced stigmas in the workplace.

While these tips are long-term solutions that can be used alongside therapy and medication, those thinking about suicide can also call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 800-273-8255.

“Working on your mental health is a lifelong venture,” Orson said. “There’s no one solution that works for everyone, but working to know your value is a good first step.”
How to avoid getting sick and when to see a doctor

By JORDAN ACHS
Laramie Boomerang

LARAMIE – Flu season is underway, and while many have tricks to avoid getting sick in the first place, sometimes the germs find a way. Lisa Rambo, infection preventionist with Ivinson Memorial Hospital, explains how to know when a bad cold is actually the flu, and when it’s worth missing school or work to get better and to stop the germs from spreading.

“Even if it’s just common cold, because those germs spread very easily, the best thing is we can be washing our hands with soap and water,” Rambo said. “Hand sanitizer is very effective, too.”

Rambo said this year’s “diagnosed, confirmed influenza cases” started appearing at IMH in mid-December and have been increasing, with a season that tends to last until March.

Influenza can often be confused for a stomach virus or even a common cold, but Rambo said the true influenza is mostly respiratory-based. She
added the best way to know if it’s worth staying home from work or school is by the presence of a fever; IMH considers anything over 100.4 degrees to be a fever.

It’s imperative to be mindful of those most at risk, Rambo said, including people over 65 years old, young infants and people with underlying health concerns, like heart conditions, diabetes or asthma.

“Of course, we encourage getting the flu shot, even now; it’s not too late to be vaccinated,” Rambo said.

While the vaccination can’t protect against all strains of the flu, Rambo said it can help those who do get the flu get better faster and can help protect those most vulnerable from contracting it.

If someone suspects they have the flu, or especially if a parent thinks their infant could have the flu, Rambo said to visit a health care provider for a quick flu test so treatment can start right away.

“If they have any underlying condition, it’s really important if they can be diagnosed within 48 hours, so they have a chance of taking a medication that can help shorten the length of influenza,” Rambo said.

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ROCK SPRINGS – Wyoming winters can be bitter, but even during the cold months, it's important for kids to go outside be kids. Sledding has been around for generations, and there's a reason it's still around. It's a fun social activity to do with friends and family and provides exercise by walking and climbing.

There's no shortage of snow on the ground, and every town has its sledding spots. Remember, it's important to choose the right hill. Head injuries are the most common injury in sledding-related accidents according to kidshealth.org. They recommend hills with mild inclines free of large rocks, poles or jumps and a large flat area at the bottom away from streets, parking lots and trees for kids to come to a gradual stop. Helmets are never a bad idea even in the safest of sledding spots.

The kind of snow also makes a big difference in how safe the experience will be. Soft snow makes for a safe landing when kids inevitably fall off the sled, so avoid icy or hard packed snowy slopes.

Cold temperatures are bitter, so it's essential to dress children appropriately. Kids won't have any fun if they're miserable from the chill. Thick waterproof coats and snow pants with gloves, hats and boots are an easy way to stave off the stinging cold. Scarves can help keep a child's neck and face warm, but kidshealth.org warns that scarves could get caught in a sled, so it's best to tuck the ends of scarves into the kid's coat.

Sledding is a spur of the moment decision for a family outing, but makeshift sleds aren't any better than no sled at all. Cardboard boxes, pieces of plastic or pool floats don't provide good places to sit while sliding down snowy hills and are impossible to steer. Investing in a sled made for the snow is relatively inexpensive and a safer option.

Sledding is a safe outdoor winter activity when done correctly. Avoiding accidents is as easy as having a conversation about safe practices and risks with a child before going to the sledding hill.

Sledding is an art, so to be good at it kids need to learn proper sled safety. Kidshealth.org recommends that an adult always be present and to learn these rules:

- Kids under five should still sled with an adult, and all those under 12 should be supervised.
- Face forward while sitting down on a sled.
- Go down the hill individually one at a time or at a considerable distance apart.
- Sledding isn't a time to be a stunt devil so no jumps or obstacles.
- Keep their arms and legs within the sled at all times, and roll away from the moving sled after falling off.
- Walk up the side of a hill so others can sled down the middle.
- Don't ride a sled that is being pulled by a vehicle.

**Head injuries most common injury for sledders**

**SLEDDING THIS WINTER**

**Practice safe Sledding**

**Sierra Brown**

Rock Springs Rocket-Miner
RAWLINS – Like some sort of frozen aphrodisiac, Wyoming’s frigid winters can actually lead to things heating up in the bedroom.

Called cuffing season, the sub-zero isolation found in the Cowboy State tends to leave folks marooned to the cozy comforts of their fireplaces, as they yearn to stay warm using not just the crackle of the flame, but the ignitable sensation of the human touch.

Studies indicate that heightened human libido, chances of Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) tend to thaw when the thermostat drops below 32 degrees, the sensations enjoyed by human contact can be an efficacious prescription to alleviating the mental and physical side effects typically caused by the winter season.

In other words, if the cold weather’s got you down, Foland said, “Have more sex.”

“We're social people,” she said. “We need human touch. We need human contact.”

As a bonus, sexual activity can burn more than 750 calories amid any given session, Foland said, which can help considering the human body tends to store more fat during the cold season.

Expressions of love, however, come in all shapes and sizes, and each activity is arguably strong enough to make the strong winds and the heavy snows a bit more tolerable. Simple things like staying in with your significant other, cooking together, watching a movie and snuggling can melt the icy coat of melancholy.

But, for some, it isn’t all puppy love.

For longer standing couples, Foland said they sometimes fall into mundane routine, when, perhaps, intimacy goes by the wayside. To interrupt “standard procedure,” Foland said not only can people “put down their phones” and initiate contact with one another, there’s a sensual remedy that goes beyond human touch: Aroma therapy.

Essential oils, to be specific, such as cinnamon, rose, and ylang-ylang, emit several potentially mood-altering scents, which can be conducive to an increase in libido, thus preventing
any notion of winter blues. And if you’re thinking age is a factor, remember, Foland said, about 46 percent of adults ages 65-70 engage in sexual activity; 71-75, 39 percent; and 76-80, 25 percent.

“Just because you’re old doesn’t mean you’re dead,” Foland joked.

The therapy works, Foland said, with specific fragrances, including human pheromones, potentially triggering a person’s hypothalamus. Once the hypothalamus is excited, it ignites what’s called the brain’s hippocampus, which is essentially a neurological mainframe that preserves emotional memories. In turn, arousal and sexual desire flare up.

But there’s more to this anthropological biology than meets the nose.

According to Natural Health Practitioner April Martinez, who operates Living with Elevation Natural Health Center, in Rawlins, an entity that specializes in essential oils and other natural therapies, a person’s yeast levels and adrenal fatigue come into play as well.

For any given client, Martinez said she provides specific testing through nutritional kinesiology, which identifies in the body what’s weak and what’s not. Yeast, for instance, is a gauge in the levels of synthetic and natural sugars, which can affect a person’s hormonal qualities.

Once identified, someone’s diet may be adjusted accordingly and they’ll be advised to also take a regimen of probiotics. Such a methodology – which, Martinez admitted, helped increase her own love life – literally attracts one third of her female clientele.

The male persuasion, however, is a bit more apprehensive to revealing any imperfections of their sexual prowess.

“Men don’t really want to share that with me,” Martinez said.

Martinez was also asked how an enhanced level of intimacy affects any given couple, and how that can combat the gelid grip of a Wyoming winter.

“I think it can be life-changing for a married couple and a partnership,” Martinez said. “They can connect physically and emotionally.”

For more tips on how to enhance your sensual side, schedule an appointment with Foland, of Course Corrections LLC, by calling (307) 677-3387.

For additional sensual remedies, visit Living with Elevation Natural Health Center, in Rawlins, at 1223 Sigma Dr., or call (307) 328-5800.

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Occupational therapy may sound like something exclusive to people who are injured on the job. Though occupational therapy helps people in the workplace every day, it also helps men and women, including those with arthritis, perform everyday activities that may or may not be work-related.

Arthritis can take both a physical and financial toll. The Arthritis Foundation notes that it’s difficult to determine just how many people currently suffer from arthritis, as treatment often isn’t sought until symptoms become severe. Conservative estimates from the AF suggest 54 million adults in the United States currently have arthritis, though the organization reports that a recent study suggested as many as 91 million might be dealing with this painful inflammation and stiffness of the joints. As if the pain from arthritis weren’t enough, the condition also can cause financial problems for those who cannot work or only work part-time, with annual medical costs and earnings loss estimates in the hundreds of billions of dollars.

Occupation therapy can help people with arthritis overcome their conditions. The American Occupational Therapy Association, Inc., notes that most joints have the potential to develop arthritis, which can affect mobility, cause pain and even lead to deformity. However, the AOTA also states that OT practitioners aim to help people with arthritis maximize their ability to participate in activities like work or recreation while striving to help patients enhance their quality of life.

Because there are more than 100 different types of arthritis, men and women diagnosed with the condition can benefit greatly from individualized care. One-size-fits-all solutions may not work for arthritis sufferers, who can benefit from one-on-one interactions with OT practitioners. For example, the AOTA notes that OT practitioners may recommend personalized adaptive equipment to patients with arthritis who are experiencing pressure and discomfort in their hands when holding or working with objects. Before making such recommendations, OT practitioners may analyze patients’ daily activities to ensure they get equipment that will provide the support and relief their specific condition calls for.

Arthritis is a global concern that the Arthritis Foundation estimates will only become more prevalent in the decades to come. Occupational therapy can be just what arthritis sufferers need to overcome their conditions and improve their quality of life.
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Much of the world adjusts their clocks each spring and fall. In the fall, clocks are fixed on standard time, while in the spring they are moved forward one hour to daylight saving time, or DST.

The rationale behind DST has long been based on energy savings, as the demand for electricity to light homes is related to the times when people go to bed at night and rise in the morning. Studies conducted by the U.S. Department of Transportation in 1975 determined that moving clocks ahead one hour could save a small amount of energy each day. In New Zealand, power companies registered a 3.5 percent decrease in usage when daylight savings starts. Even though the energy savings associated with DST can be significant, some suggest those savings come at the expense of human health.

Research suggests that a one-hour time change twice a year can significantly throw off humans’ internal clocks. A report conducted by the Massachusetts Legislature in the summer of 2016 found that people lose a significant amount of sleep in the days following DST, which can lead to an increase in both traffic fatalities and on-the-job injuries. Disrupted sleep cycles can leave people restless and coping with anxiety. A 2012 study...
published in the Journal of Applied Psychology found shifts related to DST led to killing time on the internet and other “loafing” around from lack of energy and motivation.

Finnish researchers analyzed more than 10 years of stroke data and its relation to DST. The overall rate of ischemic stroke increased by 8 percent in the first two days after transitioning to DST.

Similarly, other issues arise when clocks are switched back to standard time in the fall. Danish researchers found the rate of people seeking care for depression rose for up to 10 weeks after clocks were turned back.

Various petitions have been created to urge legislators to maintain DST all year long. The United Kingdom-based Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents says doing so will reduce road deaths currently caused by darker evenings in autumn and winter. Keeping the time consistent can help avoid body clock resets, may prevent accidents and could increase productivity in the evening hours when the autumn arrives. Only time will tell if turning the clocks back and moving them forward will become a relic of the past.

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By Chris Dewey  
Licensed acupuncturist at Third-pathway Acupuncture, Laramie  
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One of the things that I notice in my clinic is that I am sometimes the “Practitioner of Last Resort.” Clients will come to me because they have tried everything else and want to give “acupuncture a shot.” What this means in terms of treatment plans is that often I am dealing with “difficult” or “complex” cases that have become chronic over time and which have affected multiple body systems. Such issues can take a while to resolve.  

In this article, I address how we approach care in the Oriental Medical model. When you visit with a fully licensed acupuncturist or Oriental Medicine practitioner, there will likely be three distinct stages to your treatment.  

The first stage of treatment we can call the “Relief Stage.” At this stage of treatment, an acupuncturist (me, in this case), will probably...
# Wellness Wyoming

## March 2019

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[Wyoming Acupuncture Society](http://wyomingacupuncture.org)  
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Cycles of care, from 16
want to see you at least once a week for a month to address the immediate concerns. For things like migraines, I might want to see you more often than once a week, but for something like chronic low back pain, once a week might be just fine. The goal of this stage of care is to provide relief for the signs and symptoms that brought you to the clinic.

We can call the second stage the “Root Stage.” As the name suggest, this stage of care is about getting to the roots of the issue. By way of explanation we could use migraines as an example. Sometimes a client presents with ongoing acute migraines, but what underlies the onset of a migraine might be the management of life stress. Once we have relieved the migraine symptoms, we are able to address the underlying stress issues. Another example might be knee pain that brings them to my clinic. During the intake, however, and in ongoing visits, the client keeps telling me that they get no support in life, either at home or at work.

So, using the Oriental Medical model, there is an emotional component underlying the physical manifestations of joint pain in the knees or ankles. Another example I see a lot is people who come to my clinic with shoulder and neck tension and who tell me that they have so much to carry in life. The whole purpose of the second stage of care is therefore to eradicate the root of what brought you to my clinic in the first place.

At the third stage of care we are into the “Maintenance and Wellness Stage.” Again, as the name suggests, this is about both holding what we have gained and moving into higher levels of wellness. At this stage, I might be seeing you maybe once a month. The purpose of treatments in this stage is to reinforce and build upon the positive gains that we made in the previous stages. You can think of it like this: Hamlet talks about the ‘slings and arrows of outrageous fortune’, and all of us endure them every day in different ways. We handle a little stress and it is no big deal, we often don’t even notice it, but it becomes the new normal. We add a bit more stress and that becomes the new normal ... and so on. Pretty soon, we are all stressed up with nowhere to go, so the body starts to respond in less than healthy ways. The whole point of the Maintenance and Wellness Stage of care is to redress the effects of those slings and arrows of outrageous fortune before the effects pile up and undermine our health. The goal then, is to help you create a sense of vibrant well-being, whatever that looks like for you.

Of course, what can happen is that a client may come to the clinic for a couple of treatments and quit because “that didn’t work either.” Conversely, a client may stay with the treatment plan until the presenting issue is resolved, but not then make the decision to enter the Maintenance and Wellness Stage. Needless (or needle-less), to say, when a client does not engage beyond the Root Stage, it is only a matter of time before something else crops up in life that requires attention.

In conclusion, then, it might be knee pain that brings you to my clinic, but it is the desire for vibrant wellness that will cause you to continue the journey with me. Acupuncture isn't just about helping you to get well -- it is about keeping you well.

Chris Dewey owns and operates Thirdpathway Acupuncture in Laramie. Chris is a licensed acupuncturist, graduate of the Academy of Oriental Medicine at Austin, a national board-certified diplomate in Oriental Medicine, and President of the Wyoming Acupuncture Society. You can contact Chris at 662.769.5522 or chris@thirdpathwayacupuncture.com.

For a list of licensed acupuncturists in your area, please visit the Wyoming Acupuncture Society website at: http://www.wyoas.org.
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